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War and Revolution

18010052a Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 10, Oct 87 (signed to press 21 Sep 87) pp 3-7

[Article, published under the heading "Toward the 70th Anniversary of Great October," by Maj Gen I. Ye. Krupchenko, doctor of historical sciences, professor: "War and Revolution"]

[Text] The Great October Socialist Revolution which opened up the age of transition from capitalism to socialism confronted mankind with the inevitability of a decisive break in the old underpinnings of social life. To put it figuratively, if the 10 days of October 1917 shook the world, the years which followed these days altered it. The most vivid proof of this is the complete and final victory of socialism in the USSR, the formation and strengthening of the world socialist system, the collapse of the colonial system of imperialism, the present-day scope of the worker, communist and national liberation movement and the profound restructuring of mankind's spiritual life.

Our class enemies are unable to recognize the natural transition from capitalism to socialism, for this would mean their recognition of the inevitable victory of the socialist revolution on a world scale and the death of capitalism as a social system. And so they have set out to falsify Marxist-Leninist teachings about socialist revolution. In identifying the concepts of war and revolution, the bourgeois ideologists have cynically ascribed to the communists an aggressiveness and a desire to resolve social conflicts by employing war.

Under the conditions of the rapid development of the world revolutionary process, when socialism has become established in the world and is an international force, in a situation of the growing aggressiveness of imperialism and the greater opportunities for employing the achievements of scientific and technical progress in armed combat, the problem of war and revolution has assumed particular urgency.

Certainly, war and revolution do have certain common traits. They are caused by the conditions of an exploiting society and are forms of political struggle. At the same time, war and revolution, as social phenomena, have

fundamental differences, they have different reasons of occurrence, different motivating forces, ultimate goals and social consequences as well as forms and methods of realizing political goals.

However, what has been said above does not exclude dialectical relationships between war and revolution. These relationships are diverse, flexible, mobile and at times profoundly contradictory. Suffice it to say that under certain conditions, a war, for example, is capable of accelerating the maturing of the objective and subjective prerequisites for revolution and even facilitate its victory. Historical experience shows that a war, in causing greater social hardships, becomes the catalyst for the exacerbation of class contradictions and this inevitably leads to revolution.

On the other hand, a revolution can cause a war which impedes the achieving of the revolution's goals and, moreover, can lead to its defeat. Finally, a revolution can accelerate the end of a war.

The experience of World War I of 1914-1918 and the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 are a convincing illustration of what has been said.

World War I, as is known, broke out as a result of a sharp exacerbation of the economic and political contradictions within the capitalist system. It was the result of the uneven, abrupt development of capitalism in the higher stage of its existence. The war was the result of an exacerbation of the traditional contradictions inherent to premonopolistic capitalism between labor and capital and the new contradictions arising out of imperialism such as the struggle to reapportion an already divided world, for spheres of influence, markets and sources of raw materials. One of the causes of the war was also the desire of the ruling circles in the major states of the world to check the revolutionary and national liberation movement of peoples.

World War I by its nature was an unjust war predatory on the part of both warring coalitions. Having broken out between eight states, it gradually involved in its orbit some 38 countries with a population of 1.5 billion persons. The war required gigantic material outlays. While at its outset each serviceman required supplies and weapons averaging 400 rubles, by the end this indicator had increased by 5-fold, reaching 2,000 rubles. While at the start of the war all the armies were armed with 20,000 guns, by the end there were already 60,000. The total consumption of shells exceeded 1 billion units with a total cost of over 50 billion rubles.(1)

The war again emphasized the class contrasts. Against a background of the general impoverishment of the working masses in the belligerent states, there was a rise in the number of millionaires. The American billionaires gained the most. "They," wrote V.I. Lenin, "have made all, even the richest countries their tributaries. They have plundered hundreds of billions of dollars. On each dollar

you can see the traces of dirt...from the 'profitable' military deliveries which in each country further enriched the wealthy and decimated the poor. On each dollar are the traces of blood from that sea of blood shed by the 10 million killed and 20 million maimed...."(2)

The war was a heavy burden on the shoulders of the working masses. The revolutionary movement grew wider and stronger in all the warring countries. In certain countries it became so strong that the general staffs of these states were forced to consider it in working out their strategic plans.

The revolutionary situation in Russia grew particularly quickly and abruptly. As in the other countries, here the war had caused the ruin of the national economy and had brought untold suffering to the workers and peasants. In the people there was growing dissatisfaction with the war and the policy of the Tsarist autocracy. The worker strike movement grew stronger. While in 1915, there were 938 strikes involving 539,000 workers, in 1916, there were over 1,400 strikes involving over a million workers.(3) The Tsarist authorities cruelly suppressed the people's actions even to the point of shooting down the workers. A revolutionary explosion was eminent.

The political situation on the front always depended upon the situation in the rear. The new recruits who arrived at the front, having been electrified by the exacerbating class contradictions in the rear, again fell into an atmosphere of depression, corruption and humiliation from the autocratic-bourgeois officer class.

Letters from relatives and close friends had a great impact on the soldiers. Messages of hunger and exploitation by the bourgeoisie and landowners and of the growing dissatisfaction and revolutionary movement in the rear further strengthened revolutionary attitudes, but now in the army.

Thus, World War I significantly exacerbated the antagonistic contradictions between labor and capital, between the laborers and the capitalists. On the one hand, we can see the greatly increased income from the filling of military orders and, on the other, the impoverishment of the masses of people, the hunger, destruction, the millions of losses in humans, the depletion of the material supplies of the belligerents and so forth. The class struggle became sharply exacerbated and this accelerated the maturing of objective prerequisites for a revolution.

The deep basis for these prerequisites was the conflict between the productive forces and the production relations as refracted through the prism of a complex system of sociopolitical and class relations. It developed historically that Russia, being economically a medium-developed country, was the weakest link in the system of international imperialism and a key point in all its contradictions.

One cannot help but say that one of the reasons for the success of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia was the fact that it developed in the course of the world imperialist war. Neither the Entente nor the German bloc at first was able to provide direct military aid to the Russian bourgeoisie. They helped it materially and by organizing sabotage and conspiracies. Foreign military intervention began only in 1918 and by this time the socialist revolution had been victorious throughout the enormous Russian empire.

The support of the international proletariat was of great importance for the victory of the revolution in Russia. Under the influence of the October Revolution, the mass revolutionary movement grew stronger in all the capitalist countries and this not only tied the imperialists' hands but also shook the capitalist world down to its foundation. Precisely at this time in the West there arose the proletarian slogan "Hands Off Soviet Russia!" Millions of enslaved peoples joined the movement from the colonial countries. Ultimately, the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia accelerated the ending of World War I. It could not have been otherwise. In moving toward revolution, the Russian workers set as one of the most important tasks the struggle to withdraw from the war. It can be boldly asserted that this was the most antiwar revolution. Its victory decisively altered the balance of forces of war and peace.

The victory of the October Revolution which broke the chain of imperialism and opened up an opportunity to establish a new, socialist society, confirmed the strength of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism as well as the correctness of the strategy and tactics of the Bolshevik party.

The founders of Marxism-Leninism, in working out a theory of socialist revolution, did not consider war to be an objective and essential condition for revolution. In the fight against Trotsky and the "leftist" communists who denied the necessity of the Brest Peace, V.I. Lenin pointed out that they assumed supposedly that "the interests of the international revolution require the forcing of it and only war could be such a forcing.... Such a 'theory' runs fully counter to Marxism which has always denied the 'forcing' of the revolution which develops as the class contradictions, which give rise to the revolution, mature."(4)

V.I. Lenin emphasized that if a revolution is linked to a war then "one could not imagine a more torturous, harder transition, more acute need and a harsher crisis which would undermine all the productive forces."(5) The ultimate goal of a socialist revolution is not merely the overthrow of capitalism but also the building of communism. The future society must safeguard everything created by previous generations. Consequently, a revolution does not require war.

If this conclusion was valid for that period, it is all the more correct for our times. A new world war cannot be viewed as an accelerator of the movement toward socialism. As is known, fundamental changes in military

equipment have been the result of scientific and technical progress. Weapons have been invented which have never before been known in the history of mankind.

In speaking to participants of the international forum on "For a Nuclear-Free World, for the Survival of Mankind," the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, M.S. Gorbachev, said that at present "one strategic submarine has the potential for destruction equal to several World Wars II." (6) It is perfectly obvious that if a world thermonuclear war is started, its consequences can cost hundreds of millions of human lives and the loss of the greatest material and spiritual values. "Imagination," continued M.S. Gorbachev, "is powerless to imagine the hell, the negation of the very idea of man, if even the smallest part of the present nuclear potential is put into action.... Nuclear death will obliterate both socialists and capitalists...." (7) Is it really possible for a world socialist revolution to come to victory through a nuclear war?

Under present-day conditions, war has ceased being a fatal inevitability. This conclusion is based upon a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the modern age, the age of transition from capitalism to socialism on an international scale. And this means that a socialist orientation is assuming ever-greater importance in social development. The historical patterns of capitalism, including the inevitability of world war, have ceased to be dominant in world development. The decisive forces capable of preventing a world war at present are the world socialist system, the international working class, the national liberation movement and the world peace movement.

Since the first days of the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, a general direction in Soviet foreign policy has been the fight against war, the fight for peace and friendship of peoples. Over all its history, the Soviet Union has carried out a peace policy corresponding to the interests of all mankind. The Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress pointed out that at present objective conditions have come into being "under which the struggle between capitalism and socialism can occur only and exclusively in forms of peaceful competition and peaceful rivalry." (8)

The Soviet Union has constantly come forward with proposals aimed at ensuring a lasting peace in the world. A vivid confirmation of the peaceful aspirations of the Soviet Union and all the socialist commonwealth countries is the statement of the session of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact States on their military doctrine.

"The military doctrine of the Warsaw Pact states," states the Communiqué of the designated meeting, "is strictly defensive and proceeds from the fact that under present conditions the use of the military way to resolve any disputed question is inadmissible." (9)

In acting against imperialist wars, and particularly against world war, the Marxist-Leninists proceed from V.I. Lenin's tenet that peace "moves things forward an infinite number of times better than does a war...." (10)

Thus, although war and revolution arise out of the general conditions of an antagonistic society, they represent different social phenomena. A social revolution is the result of an extreme exacerbation of social contradictions within a country and a product of the action of the law of the conformity of production relations to the nature of productive forces. V.I. Lenin pointed out: "The rule of capitalism would be impossible to stop if all economic development of the capitalist nations did not lead to this. A war accelerated this process and this has made capitalism impossible. No force would destroy capitalism if history had not undermined and eroded it." (11)

No war would cause a revolution if the objective prerequisites for it had not matured inside the country. The experience of World Wars I and II is a visual illustration and confirmation of this. In the first instance the war involved 38 states, but revolution was victorious only in Russia. World War II encompassed more than 60 states, however revolutions broke out only in 11, and here not only in those countries where the Soviet troops had carried out their liberating mission. For example, the Soviet Army was not in Albania and it fought very briefly in parts of the territory of Yugoslavia, China and North Korea. However, in all these countries people's democratic revolutions were victorious. At the same time, revolutions did not occur in Austria, Norway, Denmark and Finland where the Soviet troops did fight.

Experience shows that if a revolutionary situation occurs in a country, then a war can act as a trigger mechanism putting into action the covert springs of a social revolt. "A war," wrote K. Marx, "tests a nation.... Just as mummies decompose instantaneously when they are exposed to the effects of atmosphere, so a war passes final sentence on social institutions which have lost their viability." (12)

At the same time, the founders of scientific communism repeatedly emphasized that, in employing the entire arsenal of the means of a revolutionary overthrow, it is essential to seek out the ways for a less painful form of revolutionary change. They felt that for the proletariat it would be desirable to come to power peacefully, without armed violence, with a minimum of human sacrifice and damage to the productive forces so as to thereby accelerate the construction of socialism. Confirmation of this is the experience of Great October as well as the revolutions which have occurred in a number of European, Asian and Latin American countries in the 1940s and 1950s.

Footnotes

1. "Mirovaya vojna v tsifrakh" [The World War in Figures], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1934, p. 28.

2. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 37, p 50.
3. "Mirovaya vojna v tsifrakh," p 88.
4. V.I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 35, p 403.
5. Ibid., Vol 36, p 397.
6. *PRAVDA*, 17 February 1987.
7. Ibid.
8. "Materialy XXVII syezda KPSS:" [Materials of the 27th CPSU Congress], Moscow, Politizdat, 1986, pp 65-66.
9. *PRAVDA*, 30 May 1987.
10. V.I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 40, p 247.
11. Ibid., Vol 32, p 90.
12. K. Marx and F. Engels, "Sobr. soch." [Collected Works], Vol 11, p 551.

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Results of Discussion on Strategic Operations of Great Patriotic War 1941-1945

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[Unattributed article, published under the heading "Soviet Military Art": "Results of Discussion on Strategic Operations of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945"]

[Text] A study and more thorough investigation of the history of wars and military art, in particular the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, continue to remain one of the most important tasks of military history science. In solving this, a significant role has been played by debates making it possible to bring up for discussion urgent problems of military history among a broad range of generals and officers as well as other specialists.

In 1985-1986, on the pages of *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal* a discussion was held on the strategic operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War. The necessity of this was caused by the fact that many military history works and articles defined differently the number and name of such operations. Some gave over 50 strategic operations while others gave over 50 strategic offensive operations by groups of fronts or simply 50 operations of groups of fronts, although it is well known that certain strategic operations were conducted by the troops of a single front or a single front and the naval forces. The operations were not only offensive

but also defensive. No clarity to this question was added by the *Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya* [Soviet Military Encyclopedia] and *Velikaya Otechestvennaya vojna 1941-1945. Entsiklopediya* [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. An Encyclopedia] which were published in recent years. Quite understandably this had a negative effect both on the study of the individual operations as well as on research of the problems of the history of military art as a whole.

The beginning to the discussion was made by the article of Maj Gen V.V. Gurkin and Lt Gen (Ret) M.I. Golovin with the setting out of the main criteria by which one or another operation could be put in the category of strategic. The publication was supplemented by a list of the strategic operations.(1) As a discussion of the list, the editors of the journal received rather many comments and proposals from the readers and the most essential and basic of these were published. In particular, articles were published by Maj Gens N.K. Glazunov, A.I. Mikhailov and Kh.M. Dzhelaukhov, Col B.N. Petrov, V.I. Kudryashov and B.I. Pavlov and Capt 1st Rank V.S. Shlomin.(2)

A careful study of the received replies made it possible to have a more sound approach to settling the question of categorizing one or another operation as strategic and thus clarify the list of these operations. For example, Maj Gen N.K. Glazunov and Col B.I. Pavlov argued against including the 1941 Odessa-Melitopol Defensive Operation, the Voroshilovgrad-Rostov and Rzhev-Vyazma Offensive Operations of 1943 among the strategic. They backed up their viewpoint with solid grounds and one cannot but agree with them.

Along with this, Maj Gen N.K. Glazunov and Col B.I. Pavlov as well as Col B.N. Petrov proposed that the strategic operations should include the 1941 Tikhvin and Rostov Offensive Operations. The designated operations were of great military-political and strategic significance. The Soviet troops in the course of carrying them out tied down large enemy forces and caused them significant damage and this contributed largely to the defeat of the Germans at Moscow as well as to the stabilizing of the situation on the flanks of the strategic front. These arguments were very persuasive.

At the same time, other proposals voiced in the course of the discussion were, in our view, not sufficiently sound. It would be wise to take up certain of these in greater detail.

Thus, Maj Gens (Ret) Kh.M. Dzhelaukhov and N.D. Saltykov as well as Capt 1st Rank V.S. Shlomin proposed that the first defensive operations conducted by the Soviet troops from 22 June through 6-10 July 1941 in the Baltic, Belorussia and Western Ukraine, be excluded from the strategic while the military operations carried out in these regions should be called border engagements. They based their proposals on the fact that the military leadership did not take a special decision to

conduct them and that the combat operations of the Soviet Army and Navy during that period were not coordinated in terms of place, time and goal by a single over-all concept and plan of the High Command but were conducted spontaneously.

These arguments cannot be recognized as valid. As is known, in line with the change of the state frontier in the West in 1939-1940 and the growing threat of a military attack by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union, the Red Army General Staff worked out a "Plan for the Defense of the State Frontier." In accord with this plan, directives of the People's Commissariat of Defense in the first half of May 1941 ordered the Baltic, Western and Kiev Special Military Districts, the Leningrad and Odessa Military Districts to organize a defense of the state frontier and work out the corresponding plans prior to 25 May.

Each border military district in the West was given specific tasks, zones of action, particularly crucial sectors for defense, the composition of the cover armies as well as the forces which should be left at the immediate disposal of the district commander. In addition, the task was set of building rear defensive lines in depth in the event of the retreat of the units and formations.

The directives assumed that the defensive would be based upon the stubborn holding of the fortified areas and field fortifications along the state frontier and it was pointed out that the troop actions should be of an active nature while any attempt by the enemy to push into the defenses were to be immediately thwarted by counterattacks of the corps and army reserves. The mechanized corps and aviation of the districts were to be employed for destroying the large motorized enemy groupings in the event that they broke through the defenses.(3)

Thus, the border military districts which from the start of the war were changed into fronts (with the exception of the Odessa Military District which fielded an army) in essence had tasks to conduct defensive operations which were not formally termed this but were called tasks "to cover the frontier."

In carrying out the instructions of the People's Commissariat of Defense, the district and army commanders took the appropriate decisions and set tasks for subordinates. At the same time, due to the limited amount of time the defensive was not properly organized. It was not possible to create establishing the defensive groupings and lines. The surprise enemy attack, the enemy's superiority in forces, particularly on the most important strategic axes, as well as the incomplete readiness of our troops to repel massed enemy attacks created a difficult situation for the fronts in the West and as a whole determined the inconclusiveness of their defensive operations in the initial period of the war.

Regardless of this, the Northwestern, Western, Southwestern and Southern Fronts put up stubborn resistance to the enemy groupings both on the lines close to the frontier as well as in depth. By counterstrikes of the combined-arms formations and mechanized corps and by air strikes the fronts caused the enemy significant damage and by the actions of the surrounded units and formations tied down and weakened the enemy forces and on individual axes forced it to halt the offensive and go over to the defensive.

With the outbreak of war, fierce engagements developed on a broad front, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, to a depth from 350 to 650 km. Military operations were not conducted everywhere on an improvised basis. As a whole they were controlled by Headquarters of the High Command, by the command of the fronts and armies, although there were many major shortcomings in their activities of troop leadership during that period. Over the period from 22 June through 10 July 1941, Headquarters issued to the fronts and individual armies up to 50 directives and orders to clarify and set additional tasks, for organizing and conducting combat, for employing reserves and aviation, for regrouping the troops, for preparing defensive lines and on other questions. For providing help to the fronts in organizing the rebuff of the enemy, on 22 June the following individuals were sent as representatives of the High Command: MSU B.M. Shaposhnikov to the Western Front, Army Gen G.K. Zhukov to the Southwestern, and somewhat later Lt Gen N.F. Vatutin to the Northwestern Front.

The goals and plan of the Soviet High Command during that period were having the troops of the first strategic echelon, in concentrating their main efforts on the most threatened axes, cause maximum damage to the main enemy groupings, to stop them or reduce the rate of advance and thereby create conditions for deploying the second strategic echelon of the Armed Forces.

Due to the heroic resistance of our troops and to the measures taken by Headquarters to reinforce the fronts fighting on the main axes using the strategic reserves (22d, 19th, 20th and 21st Armies and individual formations), at the end of the first 10 days of July, it was possible for a certain time to stabilize the front on a line of Pyarnu, Tartu, to the south of Lugi, Polotsk, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Sarny, Zhlobin, Novograd-Volynskiy, Zhitomir, Proskurov. The enemy had been caused significant harm. Just in the ground troops of the German Army losses on the Soviet-German Front by mid-July were around 100,000 men and almost one-half of the tanks; the German Air Force had lost 1,284 aircraft.(4)

Thus, proceeding from the set goals and tasks as well as considering the significant scope of the combat and the results achieved, the defensive operations of the Soviet troops in the Baltic, Belorussia and the Western Ukraine during the initial period of the war should be viewed as strategic.

In the course of the discussion, great attention was given to the **Dnieper-Carpathian Strategic Offensive Operation** (24 December 1943—17 April 1944). Due to the fact that this included several front offensive operations as well as two operations—Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy and Proskorovo-Chernovtsy—each conducted by the forces of two fronts, it was proposed that it be split into two or three strategic operations.

Such a proposal is not sufficiently valid. The defeat of the Nazi troops on the Right-Bank Ukraine in all the military history works has been viewed as a single strategic operation which included ten front (front groups) operations. It was carried out according to the single plan of Hq SHC [Headquarters Supreme High Command] by the forces of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Ukrainian Fronts and the Second Belorussian Front in the aim of defeating the large strategic enemy grouping and capturing important economic regions of the nation. The planning and conduct of the operation were a matter of particular attention for Hq SHC, as its results would decisively influence the success of the entire 1944 winter campaign. The operation was conducted continuously, and in the course of it Headquarters adjusted and set additional tasks for the fronts considering the achieving of the over-all goal of the operation, while the representatives of Headquarters coordinated the troop actions, remaining directly on the fronts.

If one agrees with the proposal to divide this operation, then the same must be done to certain others, for example, the Belorussian, which was carried out by four fronts. In the course of it eight front offensive operations were carried out while two (Vitebsk-Orsha and Minsk) were carried out by two or three fronts.

Ideas have been voiced also on splitting the **Chernigov-Poltava Strategic Offensive Operation of 1943** into three strategic operations: Bryansk, Chernigov-Pripyat and Poltava-Kremenchug. This is scarcely advisable. It must be considered that the Chernigov-Poltava Operation was carried out upon instructions of Hq SHC by the forces of the Central, Voronezh and Steppe Fronts and which cooperated closely on adjacent axes in the aim of defeating the opposing enemy which was endeavoring to reach the middle courses of the Dnieper and capture bridgeheads. Within this operation, three front operations (Chernigov-Pripyat, Sumy-Priluki and Poltava) were carried out. The Bryansk Offensive Operation was carried out by the Bryansk Front alone on an independent axis and according to the accepted criteria it must not be considered as strategic.

Nor can one agree with the proposal to split the **Moscow and Stalingrad Strategic Defensive Operations** into two each. Both of these were conducted on the same independent strategic axes, in truth, with slight pauses, but without any major changes in the troop groupings of the sides.

Maj Gen (Ret) N.D. Saltykov has proposed that the **Northern Caucasus Defensive Operation of 1942** be named the Defensive Operation in the Caucasus Foothills and its start would be not from 25 July, as has been pointed out in the military history works and encyclopedic publications, but from September, as up to September, in his opinion, the Soviet troops were basically retreating. This argument cannot serve as valid grounds for changing the dates and the name of the operation, since a retreat is a type of maneuver in conducting defensive operations, when the defending troops under the effect of superior enemy forces are forced to abandon the occupied lines and retreat in the aim of establishing a new grouping on a better line for combat. V.I. Lenin wrote: "If there are clearly few enough forces, then the most important defensive means is a retreat into the interior of the nation...."(5)

Also invalid, in our view, is the proposal to name the **Lower-Dnieper Strategic Offensive Operation of 1943** the Kremenchug-Pyatikhatka Operation. The problem is that Kremenchug and Pyatikhatka are 70 km apart. Both points were in the zone of advance of just the Steppe (Second Ukrainian) Front, while the Lower-Dnieper Operation was carried out by the forces of two other fronts, the Southwestern (Third Ukrainian) and Southern (Fourth Ukrainian) in the zone from Kremenchug to the Black Sea. In the course of the operation, the Soviet troops almost completely liberated the Left-Bank Ukraine in the lower courses of the Dnieper, they sealed off from the land the enemy Crimean grouping and captured bridgeheads on the western bank of the Dnieper up to 400 km long along the front and up to 100 km in depth. Hence, the Lower Dnieper Strategic Offensive Operation in terms of its content and in terms of the zone where it was carried out corresponds fully to the accepted name and there is no need to change this.

Certain comrades feel that from the strategic operations we should drop the defensive operation in the Arctic and Karelia in 1941, the Kerch-Feodosiya Landing Operation of 1941, the Operation to Break the Leningrad Blockade of 1943, the Novorossiysk-Taman Offensive Operation of 1943 and the Petsamo-Kirkenes of 1944 for the reason that they were small in scope.

In actuality, in terms of the forces involved in these operations, the width of the zone of advance and the depth, these operations were small, however, as a result of carrying them out, major military-political and strategic tasks were carried out. Each of these involved naval (flotilla) forces.

Thus, in the course of the operation in the Arctic and Karelia, troops from the Karelian Front in cooperation with forces of the Northern Fleet and White Sea Naval Flotilla in stubborn defensive battles caused great harm to the enemy, they halted its offensive, they prevented the capture of the Kiev Railroad and held Murmansk, a major unfreezing port in the north of our nation which

was of important strategic significance. In the Kerch-Feodosiya Landing Operation a major amphibious force was landed in the Crimea. A new Crimean Front was established on the captured beachhead consisting of three combined-arms armies and by their actions tied down large Nazi troop forces. As a result of the operation to lift the blockade on Leningrad, the troops of the Volkhov and Leningrad Fronts in cooperation with the Baltic Fleet restored the land communications of Leningrad with the rest of the nation and thereby thwarted the enemy's evil plan to starve the city's population.

There was also a proposal to exclude from the strategic the **Kharkov Defensive Operation of 1943** and call it, as before, the Kharkov Engagement due to the fact that the troops on the right wing of the Southwestern Front conducted defensive battles and engagements, in repelling the enemy counteroffensive, while a portion of the Voronezh Front was advancing.

It is impossible to agree with this, since the main content of those events at Kharkov was still the defense of the Southwestern and Voronezh Fronts which they conducted from 19 February until 25 March against large enemy panzer and motorized formations which had gone over to a counteroffensive. The strategic significance of this operation is that, although the Soviet troops retreated 100-150 km under the pressure of superior enemy forces, they caused the enemy heavy losses, they thwarted its plan to encircle our grouping in the Kursk area and took revenge for their defeat at Stalingrad.

The opinion has also been voiced of considering the **Balaton Defensive Operation of 1945**, conducted by the Third Ukrainian Front, as among the strategic. However, in terms of the scope, the forces involved in it and the results achieved, it does not approach this category of operations.

Thus, on the basis of the proposals and comments from the participants in the discussion as well as the results of additionally conducted research, it is advisable to exclude from the list of strategic operations three of them: Odessa-Melitopol Defensive of 1941, Voroshilov-grad-Rostov and Rzhev-Vyazma Offensive of 1943 and include too, the Tikhvin and Rostov Offensive Operations of 1941. As a result 51 strategic operations will remain in the list appended here, including 37 offensive and 14 defensive. Here 42 operations were conducted by the forces of groups of fronts, 5 operations by the forces of a single front and the navy and 4 operations by the troops of just one front. According to the proposals made in the course of the discussion, we have also adjusted the names and results of certain operations, their scope and the composition of the actual forces. The adjusted list of strategic operations has been examined at the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces and approved.

In the course of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Armed Forces carried out the main tasks by conducting strategic operations. In this context, the elaborated list

can, in our view, be of great help in studying the history of military art on the staffs, in the troops and at VUZes, as well as in conducting military history research, including in working out a new history of the Great Patriotic War and a second edition of the *Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya*. At the same time, it would be wrong to consider the proposed list as final. As a result of further research undoubtedly additions and clarifications will be incorporated in it.

As is known, during the years of the war a large number of front and army operations and the operations of the Armed Services was carried out. A number of sources indicates, for example, a number of front operations of around 250. However, as yet there is no complete list of these and this largely limits their study. For this reason, many participants in the discussion were in favor of carrying out the corresponding research so that the second edition of the *Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya* would give brief information on the front operations of the Great Patriotic War.

The editorial staff of *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal* expresses profound gratitude to the generals and officers who took part in the discussion and, which, undoubtedly, was an important stage in investigating the strategic operations of the Great Patriotic War. We are hopeful that the readers will also take an active part in the discussion which we plan to carry out on the pages of the journal in 1988 for the initial period of the Great Patriotic War.

Footnotes

1. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No 10, 1985, pp 10-23.
2. *Ibid.*, No 4, 1986, pp 48-52; No 5, pp 48-50; No 7, pp 46-48.
3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 16-A, inv. 2951, file 237, sheets 33-47, 65-81; file 243, sheets 4-35; file 259, sheets 1-17.
4. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945. Kratkaya istoriya" [The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941-1945. Concise History], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 63.
5. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 36, p 292.

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STRATEGIC OPERATIONS OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES
IN THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR OF 1941-1945

No.	Name of Operation and Dates	Field Forces Involved in Operation	Opposing Enemy Forces	Scope of Operation		Results of Operation
				Along Front, km	In Depth, km	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
First Period of War (22 June 1941-18 November 1942)						
1	Defensive operation in Baltic (22 Jun-9 Jul 41)	NW Front, Baltic Fleet	Army Group North, part of 3d Panzer Group & 9th Army of Army Group Center, 1st Air Fleet, German and Finnish Navies on Baltic Sea	350-450	400-450	Enemy plan thwarted to destroy troops of front in border area. By counterstrikes of III and XII Mechanized Corps and by defense on intermediate lines, great damage caused to advancing enemy grouping, its strike force weakened and rate of advance declined. This allowed our troops to prepare defensive lines in depth and bring up fresh reserves.
2	Defensive operation in Belorussia (22 Jun-9 Jul 41)	Western Front, Pinsk Naval Flotilla	Army Group Center, 2d Air Fleet	450-800	450-600	By resistance on frontier and intermediate lines, by counterstrikes of mechanized corps and rifle formations great damage caused to main Wehrmacht grouping, its rate of advance slowed down. This provided opportunity to deploy troops of second strategic echelon on line of Western Dvina and Dnieper from Kraslava to Loev.
3	Defensive operation in Western Ukraine (22 Jun-6 Jul 41)	SW and Southern Fronts, part of Black Sea Fleet	Army Group South, VIII Hungarian Corps, 4th Air Fleet	600-700	300-350	By resistance on frontier and intermediate defensive lines, by counterstrikes of mechanized corps in areas of Dubno, Lutsk and Rovno, great damage caused to enemy, the offensive of its main grouping checked and this made it possible to withdraw troops for taking up fortified areas on old frontier on line of Korosten, Novograd-Volynskiy, Shepetovka, Starokonstantinov, Proskurov.
4	Defensive operation in Arctic and Karelia (29 Jun-10 Oct 41)	Part of Northern Front (from 23 Aug 41, Karelian Front), Northern Fleet, White Sea Naval Flotilla	German Army Norway, III Finnish Army Corps, Finnish Army Karelia, part of 5th Air Fleet and Finnish Air Forces, operations group of German Navy	800	50-150	In stubborn defensive battles Soviet troops halted enemy offensive, defeated it and thwarted plan to capture Murmansk and Murmansk Railroad.
5	Kiev Defensive Operation (17 Jul-26 Sep 41)	SW Front, part of Bryansk and Southern Fronts, Dnieper detachment of Pinsk Naval Flotilla	Army Group South, part of Army Group Center, 4th Air Fleet	300	600	During more than 2 months of defensive battles great damage caused to enemy and forced German Command to achieve its aims on this axis to use a portion of Army Group Center (2d Army and 2d Panzer Group) thereby checking enemy advance on main (Moscow) axis.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Leningrad Defensive Operation (10 Jul-30 Sep 41)	Northern (from 23 Aug 41, Leningrad), NW Fronts, Baltic Fleet, Ladoga Naval Flotilla	Army Group North, SE Army of Finns, part of Finnish Air Force and Navy	450	70-300	In stubborn fighting enemy was defeated, its advance halted, and plan to capture Leningrad without a halt checked.
7	Smolensk Engagement (Smolensk Defensive Operation) (10 Jul-10 Sep 41)	Western, Central, Bryansk and Reserve Fronts	Army Group Center, part of 16th Army of Army Group North, 2d Air Fleet	600-650	100-250	Major defeat to enemy, its advance checked on main axis for 2 months and this played important role in thwarting the plan for a "blitzkrieg" against USSR.
8	Donbass-Rostov Defensive Operation (29 Sep-16 Nov 41)	Southern Front and portion of SW Front, Azov Naval Flotilla	Army Group South, 4th Air Fleet	400-670	150-300	Enemy plan thwarted to surround and destroy Southern Front and continue offensive to Caucasus. Enemy suffered heavy losses and its offensive halted.
9	Moscow Defensive Operation (30 Sep-5 Dec 41)	Western, Kalinin, Reserve and Bryansk Fronts	Army Group Center, part of 16th Army of Army Group North, 2d Air Fleet	700-1100	300-350	Major defeat dealt to main enemy grouping and its offensive halted. Conditions created for going over to counteroffensive and defeating enemy at Moscow.
10	Tikhvin Offensive Operation (10 Nov-30 Dec 41)	5th Army of Leningrad Front, 4th and 52d Separate Armies (from 17 Dec 41 combined into Volkhov Front), Novgorod Army Group of NW Front	16th Army, part of 18th Army of Army Group North, part of 1st Air Fleet	300-350	100-120	Major damage done to 10 enemy divisions, significant territory liberated, and enemy plan thwarted to completely isolate Leningrad from nation and starve it out. Operation helped establish conditions for going over by Soviet troops to counteroffensive at Moscow.
11	Rostov Offensive Operation (17 Nov-2 Dec 41)	Southern Front, 56th Separate Army (from 23 Nov 41 part of Southern Front)	Part of Army Group South, 4th Air Fleet	170	80	Major defeat to enemy 1st Panzer Army, its troops pushed back 80 km from Rostov and enemy breakthrough to Caucasus prevented. Operation helped establish conditions for going over of our troops to counteroffensive at Moscow.
12	Moscow Offensive Operation (5 Dec 41-7 Jan 42)	Western and Kalinin Fronts, part of SW Front, Bryansk Front (from 21 Dec 41)	Army Group Center, Operations Group of Air Forces Ost	1000	100-250	Soviet troops defeated enemy assault groupings, routed 38 enemy divisions, including 15 panzer and motorized, advanced 100-250 km to west, liberated over 11,000 population points, including cities of Volokolamsk, Kalinin, Kaluga, Klin and so forth. Direct threat to Moscow eliminated.
13	Kerch-Feodosiya Landing Operation (25 Dec 41-2 Jan 42)	Transcaucasus (from 30 Dec 41, Caucasian) Front, and part of Black Sea Fleet, Azov Naval Flotilla	Part of 11th Army of Army Group South, and part of 4th Air Fleet	250	100-110	Amphibious force landed on Kerch Peninsula, consisting of 2 combined arms armies which advanced 100-110 km and captured important bridgehead, where Crimean Front was deployed. This forced enemy to break off offensive against Sevastopol and shift part of forces to fight Crimean Front.

[continuation of Strategic Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Rzhev-Vyasma Offensive Operation (8 Jan-20 Apr 42)	Kalinin and Western Fronts	Army Group Center, Air Force Operations Group Ost	650	80-250	Soviet troops dealt major defeat to enemy, completely liberated Moscow and Tula Oblasts, many rayons of Kalinin and Smolensk Oblasts. In course of operation, enemy lost 330,000 men. Flanks of Army Group Center were deeply enveloped by our troops.
15	Voronezh-Voroshilovgrad Defensive Operation (28 Jun-24 Jul 42)	Bryansk, Voronezh (from 7 Jul 42), SW and Southern Fronts	Army Group South, from 9 Jul 42, Army Groups A and B, 4th Air Fleet	900	150-400	In course of stubborn fighting, enemy plans thwarted to defeat main forces of Soviet troops on southwestern sector. Its assault grouping suffered heavy losses.
16	Stalingrad Defensive Operation (17 Jul-18 Nov 42)	Stalingrad (Don), SE (Stalingrad) Fronts, Volga Naval Flotilla	Army Group B, part of 4th Air Fleet	250-500	150	Enemy defeated, its offensive stopped and conditions created for going over of our troops to counteroffensive.
17	Northern Caucasus Defensive Operation (25 Jul-31 Dec 42)	Southern (until 28 Jul 42), Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasian Fronts, Black Sea Fleet, Azov Naval Flotilla	Army Group A, part of 4th Air Fleet, German and Romanian Navies on Black Sea	320-1000	400-800	As a result of operation, enemy offensive halted, enemy suffered great losses, and its plans to capture oil fields of Caucasus and bring Turkey into war against USSR were thwarted.
Second Period of War (19 November 1942-31 December 1943)						
18	Stalingrad Offensive Operation (19 Nov 42-2 Feb 43)	SW, Don and Stalingrad Fronts, Volga Naval Flotilla	Army Group B (from 22 Nov 42, Army Group Don), 4th Air Fleet	850	150-200	Main forces of German 6th and 4th Panzer Armies surrounded and destroyed, 3d and 4th Romanian Armies and 8th Italian Army defeated. Enemy losses were over 800,000 men, up to 2,000 tanks and assault guns, over 10,000 guns and mortars, around 3,000 aircraft. Soviet Army firmly took strategic initiative.
19	Northern Caucasus Offensive Operation (1 Jan-4 Feb 43)	Transcaucasian, Northern Caucasus Fronts, part of Southern Front, Black Sea Fleet	Army Group A, part of Army Group Don and 4th Air Fleet, German, Romanian and Italian Navies on Black Sea	840	300-600	Army Group A defeated, its troops pushed 300-600 km to west, and three oil fields liberated.
20	Operation to break Leningrad blockade (12 Jan-30 Jan 43)	Part of Leningrad, Volkhov Fronts and Baltic Fleet	18th Army of Army Group North, part of 1st Air Fleet	45	60	In course of offensive, enemy blockade broken and overland communications of Leningrad with rest of country restored. Enemy plan thwarted to starve out millions of people in city.
21	Voronezh-Kharkov Offensive Operation (13 Jan-3 Mar 43)	Voronezh Front, part of Bryansk and SW Fronts	Army Group B, part of 4th Air Fleet	250-400	360-520	Soviet troops dealt major defeat to Army Group B. The 2d Hungarian Army and 8th Italian Army which were part of it were almost completely destroyed. Significant territory and a number of major industrial and administrative centers such as Voronezh, Kursk, Belgorod and Kharkov were liberated from occupiers.

[continuation of Strategic Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	Kharkov Defensive Operation (19 Feb-25 Mar 43)	SW and Voronezh Fronts	Army Group South, part of Army Group Center, 6th Air Fleet	300-350	100-150	Enemy suffered heavy losses, its counteroffensive stopped and enemy plan to surround our troops in Kursk area thwarted.
23	Kursk Defensive Operation (5 Jul-23 Jul 43)	Central, Voronezh and Steppe Fronts	2d and 9th Armies of Army Group Center, 4th Panzer Army and Operations Group Kampf, Army Group South, 4th and 6th Air Fleets	550	10-35	In course of defensive engagements, enemy assault groups were ground down, bled white and halted. Conditions created for going over to counteroffensive by our troops.
24	Orel Offensive Operation (12 Jul-18 Aug 43)	Bryansk, Central Fronts and part of Western Front	2d Panzer and 9th Armies of Army Group Center, 6th Air Fleet	400	150	15 enemy divisions defeated. Soviet troops advance 115 km and liberate significant territory from occupiers. Strongly fortified enemy bridgehead eliminated from which it advanced in Kursk Battle.
25	Belgorod-Kharkov Offensive Operation (3 Aug-23 Aug 43)	Voronezh and Steppe Fronts	4th Panzer Army and Operations Group Kampf of Army Group Center, part of 4th Air Fleet	300-400	140	15 enemy divisions defeated. Our troops advanced 140 km in depth, having widened breach to 400 km, and liberated Kharkov Industrial Area.
26	Smolensk Offensive Operation (17 Aug-2 Oct 43)	Kalinin and Western Fronts	3d Panzer, 4th and 9th Armies of Army Group Center, 6th Air Fleet	400	200-250	Smolensk and part of Kalinin Oblasts liberated, start made to liberation of Belorussia. 17 enemy divisions were defeated and 14 divisions suffered heavy losses.
27	Donbass Offensive Operation (13 Aug-22 Sep 43)	SW and Southern Fronts	1st Panzer and 6th Armies, part of 8th Army of Army Group South and 4th Air Fleet	450	250-300	Soviet troops defeated 13 enemy divisions, liberated Donbass, reached approaches to Dnieper. Major economic area returned to nation.
28	Chernigov-Poltava Offensive Operation (26 Aug-30 Sep 43)	Central, Voronezh and Steppe Fronts	2d Army of Army Group Center, 4th Panzer and 8th Armies of Army Group South, part of 4th and 6th Air Fleets	600	250-300	Troops of 3 fronts reached Dnieper and captured bridgehead on right bank. In course of operation 17 enemy divisions defeated.
29	Novorossiysk-Taman Offensive Operation (10 Sep-9 Oct 43)	Northern Caucasus Front, Black Sea Fleet, Azov Naval Flotilla	17th Army of Army Group A, portion of 4th Air Fleet	80	150	Liberation of Caucasus completed, important enemy bridgehead eliminated which gave it good conditions for defense of Crimea. Liberation of Novorossiysk and Taman Peninsula significantly improved basing of Black Sea Fleet and created good conditions for attacking the Crimean enemy grouping from the sea and across the Kerch Strait.
30	Lower Dnieper Offensive Operation (26 Sep-20 Dec 43)	Steppe (Second Ukrainian), SW (Third Ukrainian), South, 6th Army of Southern (Fourth Ukrainian) Fronts	1st Panzer and 8th Armies of Army Group A, 4th Air Fleet	750-800	100-300	Troops of 3 fronts complete liberation of Left-Bank Ukraine in lower courses of Dnieper, blockade from land the Crimean enemy troop grouping and capture bridgehead on western bank of Dnieper up to 400 km along front and 100 km in depth.

[continuation of Strategic Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	Kiev Offensive Operation (3 Nov-13 Nov 43)	First Ukrainian Front	2d Army of Army Group Center, 4th Panzer Army, part of 8th Army of Army Group South and 4th Air Fleet	320-500	150	Troops of front liberated capital of Ukraine, Kiev, and formed strategic bridgehead on right bank of Dnieper more than 300 km along front and 150 km in depth playing important role in carrying out operations to liberate Right-Bank Ukraine. In course of operation 15 enemy divisions defeated.
Third Period of War (January 1944-May 1945)						
32	Offensive Operation to liberate Right-Bank Ukraine (24 Dec 43-17 Apr 44)	First, Second, Third and Fourth Ukrainian and Second Belorussian Fronts	Army Groups South and A, 4th Air Fleet, Romanian Air Force	1300-1400	250-450	Soviet troops liberated Right-Bank Ukraine, reach Carpathian foothills and state frontier with Romania, split southern wing of strategic enemy front. In course of operation 10 divisions and 1 brigade were destroyed and over 59 divisions suffered losses from one-half to three-quarters of personnel.
33	Leningrad-Novgorod Offensive Operation (14 Jan-1 Mar 44)	Leningrad, Volkhov and Second Baltic Fronts, Baltic Fleet	Army Group North, 1st Air Fleet, Naval Operations Group on Baltic	600	220-280	Major defeat dealt to Army Group North, 26 divisions routed, including 3 destroyed. Leningrad completely freed from enemy blockade.
34	Crimean Offensive Operation (5 Apr-12 May 44)	Fourth Ukrainian Front, Separate Maritime Army, Black Sea Fleet, Azov Naval Flotilla	17th Army of Army Group Southern Ukraine, part of 4th Air Fleet, Romanian Air Force, German and Romanian Navies on Black Sea	160	200-260	Enemy 17th Army (to 12 divisions) completely routed, Crimea liberated, better conditions for basing and combat of Black Sea Fleet.
35	Vyborg-Petrozavodsk Offensive Operation (10 Jun-9 Aug 44)	Part of Leningrad and Karelian Fronts, Baltic Fleet, Ladoga and Onega Naval Flotillas	Troops of Finnish Operations Groups Mosel, Karelian Isthmus and Olonets, Finnish Air Force	280	110-250	Major defeat to enemy troops defending Karelian Isthmus and Southern Karelia and this created conditions for liberation of Arctic and withdrawal of Finland from war.
36	Belorussian Offensive Operation (23 Jun-29 Aug 44)	First Baltic, Third, Second and First Belorussian Fronts, Dnieper Naval Flotilla, 1st Polish Army	Army Group Center, portion of 16th Army of Army Group North and 4th Panzer Army of Army Group Northern Ukraine, 6th Air Fleet	1100	550-600	Defeat dealt to Army Group Center with 17 divisions and 3 brigades destroyed and 50 divisions losing over one-half of personnel. Belorussia and part of Lithuania liberated, good conditions created for attacking enemy groupings in Baltic, East Prussia and Poland.
37	Lwow-Sandomierz Offensive Operation (13 Jul-29 Aug 44)	First Ukrainian Front	Army Group Northern Ukraine, part of 4th Air Fleet	440	350	Defeat of Army Group Northern Ukraine, western oblasts of Ukraine and southeastern regions of Poland liberated from occupiers. Major bridgehead captured on west bank of Vistula and of great importance for subsequent offensive on Silesian axis.

[continuation of Strategic Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38	Iasi-Kishinev Offensive Operation (20 Aug-29 Aug 44)	Second and Third Ukrainian Fronts, Black Sea Fleet and Danube Naval Flotilla	Army Group Southern Ukraine, part of 4th Air Fleet, Romanian Air Force	500	300-320	Army Group Southern Ukraine completely destroyed; 22 German divisions destroyed and virtually all Romanian divisions on the front routed. Moldavia liberated and Romania withdraws from Nazi bloc, declaring war on Germany.
39	Eastern Carpathian Offensive Operation (8 Sep-28 Oct 44)	Fourth Ukrainian Front, portion of First Ukrainian Front, 1 Czechoslovak Army Corps	Army Group Heinrici (German 1st Panzer Army and 1st Hungarian Army), portion of 4th Air Fleet	400	50-110	Defeat of Army Group Heinrici, Carpathian Ukraine liberated. Soviet troops, having crossed Main Carpathian Range enter Czechoslovak territory.
40	Baltic Offensive Operation (14 Sep-24 Nov 44)	First, Second and Third Baltic Fronts, part of Leningrad and Third Belorussian Fronts, Baltic Fleet	Army Group North, part of 3d Panzer Army of Army Group Center, 1st Air Fleet and portion of 6th Air Fleet	1000	300	Liberation of Baltic (except Kurland) completed. Of 79 enemy formations existing at start of operation in Baltic, 29 were defeated and rest sealed off in Kurland.
41	Belgrad Offensive Operation (25 Sep-20 Oct 44)	Third Ukrainian Front, portion of Second Ukrainian Front, troops of Yugoslav PLA, 1st, 2d and 4th Bulgarian Armies, Danube Naval Flotilla	Army Group Serbia of Army Group F, part of Army Group E, Air Force Operations Group Southeast	400-620	200	Army Group Serbia of Army Group F defeated, defeat of Army Group E, eastern regions of Yugoslavia and its capital Belgrad liberated. Enemy forced to hurriedly pull troops out of Greece over Yugoslav mountain roads.
42	Petsamo-Kirkenes Offensive Operation (7 Oct-29 Oct 44)	Karelian Front and Northern Fleet	20th German Mountain Army, 5th Air Fleet, German Navy in Berents Sea	80	150	Soviet troops under harsh Arctic conditions defeat enemy, reach frontier with Norway and liberate a portion of its territory, including city of Kirkenes, from occupiers. In course of operation around 30,000 men destroyed and 156 enemy ships and vessels sunk.
43	Budapest Offensive Operation (29 Oct 44-13 Feb 45)	Second and Third Ukrainian Fronts, Danube Naval Flotilla, 1st and 4th Romanian Armies	Troops of Army Group South, portion of 4th Air Fleet, Hungarian Air Force	420	250-400	Enemy troops liberated central regions of Hungary and its capital Budapest. A 188,000-strong enemy grouping surrounded and destroyed. Hungary out of war, good conditions created for offensive in Czechoslovakia and Austria.
44	Vistula-Oder Offensive Operation (12 Jan-3 Feb 45)	First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts, 1st Polish Army	Troops of Army Group A (from 26 Jan 45, Army Group Center), 6th Air Fleet	500	500	Soviet troops liberated larger portion of Polish territory, entered German territory and reached Oder, having captured number of bridgeheads on its western bank. In course of operation 35 enemy divisions were destroyed and 25 routed.
45	Western Carpathian Offensive Operation (12 Jan-16 Feb 45)	Fourth and Second Ukrainian Fronts, 1st and 4th Romanian Armies	1st Panzer Army, part of 17th Army, 1st Hungarian Army of Army Group A (from 26 Jan 45, Army Group Center), 6th and 8th Armies of Army Group South, portion of 4th Air Fleet	440	170-230	In course of operation, Soviet troops defeat enemy, liberate southern regions of Poland, a portion of Czechoslovak territory and cross Western Carpathians.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46	East Prussian Offensive Operation (13 Jan-25 Apr 45)	Second and Third Belorussian Fronts, portion of First Baltic Front and Baltic Fleet	Army Group Center (from 26 Jan 45, Army Group North), portion of 6th Air Fleet, German Navy on Baltic Sea	550	120-200	Soviet troops capture East Prussia. In course of operation 25 enemy divisions destroyed, 12 divisions suffer heavy losses. German Navy deprived of number of major naval bases sharply impeding supply of Kurland enemy grouping.
47	East Pomeranian Operation (10 Feb-4 Apr 45)	First and Second Belorussian Fronts, part of Baltic Fleet	Army Group Vistula, part of 6th Air Fleet, German Navy on Baltic Sea	460	130-150	21 enemy divisions and 8 brigades defeated, threat eliminated of its counterstrike in flank and rear of First Belorussian Front, East Pomerania cleared of Nazi troops. Soviet troops reach Baltic Seacoast and secure flank of main strategic grouping of our troops fighting on Berlin axis.
48	Vienna Offensive Operation (16 Mar-15 Apr 45)	Third Ukrainian Front, part of Second Ukrainian Front, Danube Naval Flotilla, 1st Bulgarian Army	Troops of Army Group South, part of Army Group E, 4th Air Fleet	230	150-250	Liberation of Hungary completed, enemy cleared out of southern regions of Czechoslovakia and Eastern Austria with its capital Vienna. In course of operation Soviet troops defeated 32 enemy divisions.
49	Berlin Offensive Operation (16 Apr-8 May 45)	Troops of First and Second Belorussian Fronts and First Ukrainian Front, part of Baltic Fleet, Dnieper Naval Flotilla, 1st and 2d Polish Armies	Army Group Vistula, 4th Panzer and 17th Armies of Army Group Center, 6th Air Fleet, Air Fleet Reich	300	100-120	In course of operation Soviet troops defeat 70 infantry divisions, 23 panzer and motorized divisions, capture 480,000 men and take capital of Germany, Berlin, linking up with Anglo-American troops on Elbe and forcing Nazi Germany to unconditionally surrender.
50	Prague Offensive Operation (6 May-11 May 45)	First, Second and Fourth Ukrainian Fronts, 2d Polish Army	Army Group Center, 8th Army, portion of 6th Panzer Army SS of Army Group Austria, 4th Air Fleet	1200	160-200	In course of operation, 860,000-strong German troop groupings surrounded and taken prisoner. Czechoslovakia and its capital Prague liberated from Nazi occupation.
Campaign in Far East (August 1945)						
51	Manchurian Offensive Operation (9 Aug-2 Sep 45)	Transbaykal, First and Second Far Eastern Fronts, Pacific Fleet, Amur Naval Flotilla, formations of Mongolian Army	Kwantung Army (1st, 3d, 17th Fronts, 4th Army, 2d and 5th Air Armies), Manchukuo Army, Army of Prince Dewan and Suixuan Army Group of Inner Mongolia, Sungari Naval Flotilla	2700	200-800	Kwantung Army and puppet armies of Japan in Manchuria and North China defeated. Soviet troops advance 200-800 km, liberate Manchuria, Northeast China, and northern part of Korea. Defeat of Kwantung Army and loss of military-economic base in China and Korea deprive Japan of real forces to continue war.

[continuation of Strategic Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945]

Methods of Defeating Enemy in Strategic Offensive Operations

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21 Sep 87) pp 25-31

[Article by Maj Gen P.T. Kunitskiy: "Methods of Defeating the Enemy in Strategic Offensive Operations"]

[Text] The strategic offensive by the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War was carried out in the form of strategic offensive operations (operations of groups of fronts) and the success of these to a significant degree was determined by the selected methods of defeating the enemy. The most effective of these were: encirclement and destruction of large enemy groupings; splitting its strategic front; crushing the strategic front with the subsequent destruction of the isolated groupings. In many operations these methods were combined.

The encirclement and destruction of large enemy groupings were most frequently employed in those instances when the enemy had a sufficiently strong and compact troop grouping and the configuration of the front line made it possible to attack it in the flank and rear. This method was particularly effective when the flanks of the enemy groupings were weakened, when they did not have natural obstacles and were covered by less battle-worthy troops.

The encirclement of large enemy troop groupings and their destruction represented a difficult problem, particularly in 1941 and the beginning of 1942 when the Soviet troops still did not have mobile field forces as well as the appropriate combat experience. Thus, on 25 February 1942, to the west of Demyansk (the Demyansk Operation), the Northwestern Front closed a ring around the enemy II Army Corps. Six divisions (around 95,000 men) were encircled. But the enemy was not firmly sealed off from the air and this made it possible for it to ferry in reinforcements, ammunition and food to the surrounded troops. Moreover, the forces of the front were distributed evenly along the entire perimeter of encirclement and did not have decisive superiority on any of the axes. Due to the weakness and passivity of the external perimeter of encirclement, the enemy on 23 April was able to break the ring of encirclement and lead the troops out along the Ramushevo (named after the village Ramushevo) corridor which was 6-8 km wide.(1)

As the generalship skills of the military personnel and the technical equipping of the troops rose, and particularly with the appearance in the fronts and the reserve of Hq SHC of tank and mechanized corps, tank and air armies, artillery divisions and breakthrough corps, the operations to encircle and destroy the enemy were carried out with high effectiveness. For example, of the 130 enemy divisions destroyed in 1944, over one-half was destroyed

and taken prisoner in the course of such operations.(2) As a total on the Soviet-German Front, this method was used to rout over 200 enemy formations.(3)

An analysis indicates that the essential conditions for successfully conducting an encirclement operation were: an advantageous position for one's troops to quickly come out in the flanks and rear of the enemy grouping; the capturing by mobile troops of important areas, road junctions in the enemy rear; the conducting of active operations on the inner and outer perimeters of encirclement with the simultaneous sealing off of the enemy which had fallen into the pocket from the air and on maritime axes, from the sea. The encirclement was achieved by launching two thrusts along converging axes; one or two enveloping thrusts with the simultaneous pressing of the cut-off grouping to a natural obstacle such as the sea; by launching several frontal attacks and their continuation in the operational depth coming out in the flank and rear of the opposing grouping in the course of pursuit.

The first, truly classic example of an encirclement operation was the Soviet troop counteroffensive at Stalingrad. In the Stalingrad pocket an inglorious end was met by the main forces of the 6th Army and a portion of the 4th Panzer Army including 22 divisions and over 160 separate units numbering a total of around 330,000 men.

The surrounding of the large enemy troop grouping at Stalingrad and its destruction were carried out almost with an even balance of forces for the sides and in a rapid time. The objectives of encirclement were well equipped troops which had great combat experience. With all the effectiveness of the operation, it was not possible to turn the encirclement, splitting and destruction of the enemy into a single, unbroken process. It was necessary to organize a special operation to eliminate the surrounded enemy grouping and this diverted significant forces for an extended time from actions on the external perimeter.

The organization and conduct of a strategic operation to surround and destroy the enemy were continuously improved. This applied particularly to an optimum distribution of forces for actions on the internal and external perimeters of encirclement, the air blockading of the troops which had fallen into the pocket and the achieving of a high rate of their defeat. Thus, while in the Stalingrad Operation the encirclement was achieved by pincer strikes and the elimination of the isolated grouping was carried out only after the defeat of the enemy counterstrike groupings before the external perimeter and ended on the 71st day of encirclement, in the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation the destruction of the troops in the created pocket was carried out in the process of encircling and repelling powerful counterstrikes by a tank grouping from outside and was completed in 14 days.

In the Iasi-Kishinev Operation it took the Soviet troops just 4 days to crush the enemy defenses and surround the main forces of the German Army Group Southern Ukraine. This operation was marked by the launching of two powerful thrusts on converging axes at a distance of 200 km apart. A mobile external perimeter also was established simultaneously with the encirclement. By the

time of completing the encirclement in the Kishinev area, this front was 80-100 km from the internal perimeter of encirclement. As a result of this the enemy was deprived of the possibility of breaking out of the pocket. The enemy units and formations which had broken out to the west, without succeeding in escaping from the ring of operational encirclement, fell into a new, tactical encirclement and ultimately were doomed to destruction. The Command of Army Group Southern Ukraine on 5 September stated that the encircled corps and divisions of the 6th Army should be viewed as completely lost and that this defeat was the greatest catastrophe which had ever befallen the army group.(4)

The East Prussian Operation was characterized by the cutting off of the troops of Army Group Center, pressing them to the sea, splitting and destroying them piecemeal. The Second Belorussian Front (commander, MSU K.K. Rokossovskiy) launched a deep enveloping thrust from the lower courses of the Narew River on the Elbing axis while the Third Belorussian Front (commander, Army Gen A.D. Chernyakhovskiy, from 20 February, MSU A.M. Vasilevskiy) to the north of the Masurian Lakes toward Konigsberg.

On 26 January 1945, the Second Belorussian Front reached the Baltic Sea to the north of Elbing and as a result of this cut the route of retreat of the East Prussian enemy grouping. The Third Belorussian Front, having taken the strong defensive center of Instenburg, by 29 January had reached the Baltic Seacoast, outflanking Konigsberg to the north, northwest and southwest. As a result, the main enemy forces (around 32 divisions) were pressed to the sea, split into three isolated groupings and destroyed.

Large enemy groupings were surrounded with great art in the course of the Berlin Operation conducted by the First and Second Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts. Its over-all concept was based upon the launching of several splitting thrusts which would crush the unified front of heavily fortified and deeply echeloned enemy defenses, with the subsequent encirclement and destruction of the enemy piecemeal. As a result of these actions, a large Wehrmacht grouping was surrounded in two areas (Berlin and Frankfurt-Guben). The operation is also instructive in the speed of eliminating the surrounded groupings by launching concentric thrusts, by splitting and destroying them piecemeal. While at Stalingrad it required over 2 months to destroy a grouping 230,000 strong, the surrounded Berlin grouping numbering 500,000 soldiers and officers, in being split into two parts, was destroyed in just 7 days.

The Frankfurt-Guben grouping was basically destroyed not in the encirclement area but in the course of thwarting its attempts to break out to the west. The dynamics of the fighting included a early going over to the offensive on the routes the enemy would take out of the encirclement as well as attacks by rifle and tank formations to cut off, encircle and destroy the enemy breaking out of encirclement.

For all the operations to encircle and destroy the enemy, the most characteristic was that an external perimeter of encirclement would be established simultaneously with the internal one. Only with the establishing of solid internal and active external perimeters was the surrounding of the enemy grouping considered complete. The operations, as a rule, began when the strong assault groupings breached the enemy defenses simultaneously on several axes. The following deep drive of the Soviet troops led to the splitting and breaking up of the enemy front into a number of separate sectors. This created conditions for continuing the offensive on converging axes for surrounding the large Nazi troop masses in their tactical and operational depth.

Of exceptional importance were the successful air operations. Only under the conditions of complete air domination of our aviation were the greatest results achieved in surrounding a large enemy grouping. The aviation established a decisive air blockade of the surrounded grouping. The covering and supporting of the ground troops on the internal and external perimeters of encirclement, the combating of enemy reserves, the conducting of reconnaissance and other air operations ensured the success of the troops on the perimeters in destroying the surrounded groupings.

The method of splitting thrusts(5) was more often employed in those instances when there was a significant superiority in forces and the terrain made it possible to employ large masses of tanks.

The splitting of defenses envisaged the launching of a strong and deep thrust by cooperating fronts (and sometimes by one front) to the entire depth of the opposing grouping's position. As a result of the strong initial thrusts on several axes, large breaches were formed in the enemy defenses, its grouping was split into parts and this facilitated the destruction of the individual enemy troop groupings which were now isolated and had lost effective contact. In addition, the offensive on a wide front along parallel or even diverging axes led to the formation of numerous pockets which were eliminated in the course of the offensive by the approaching troops of the combined-arms armies and by air strikes.

In the Belgorod-Kharkov Operation (3-23 August 1943), a strong splitting thrust was launched by the troops of the adjacent wings of the Voronezh (commander, Army Gen N.F. Vatutin) and Steppe (commander, Col Gen I.S. Konev) Fronts. Their troops went over to a counteroffensive, when the enemy had been ground down and had still not taken up a strong defense. For reducing the time to prepare the operation (to exclude a major regrouping), the main thrusts of the fronts were launched not against a weak point but rather against a strong point in the enemy defenses. The breakthrough was carried out on the narrow sectors of the front with a density of up to 230 guns and mortars and 70 tanks and SAU per kilometer of front. The powerful splitting thrust by the forces of the adjacent flanks of the two fronts led to the splitting of the Nazi grouping defending the Belgorod-Kharkov Salient into two isolated parts. In the course of the operation, 15 enemy divisions were destroyed, including 4 panzer.

In the Lwow-Sandomierz Operation (13 July-29 August 1944) conducted by just one front (First Ukrainian, commander, MSU I.S. Konev), two powerful thrusts were launched simultaneously: at the center from the Ternopol area in the direction of Lwow and on the right wing from the Lutsk area in the direction of Rava-Russkaya. By the offensive of a portion of the forces from the two groupings against Derevyany, the enemy grouping was surrounded and destroyed to the west of Brody. Characteristic of the Vistula-Oder Operation (12 January-3 February 1945) conducted by the First Belorussian (commander, MSU G.K. Zhukov) and First Ukrainian (commander, MSU I.S. Konev) Fronts was the launching of strong splitting thrusts against the strongpoints of the enemy defenses. The First Belorussian Front launched two thrusts from the Vistula bridgeheads (Magnuszew and Pulawy); the First Ukrainian Front one thrust from the Sandomierz bridgehead.

The launching of the main thrusts against the strong sectors of the defenses in the aim of avoiding the crossing of a major water obstacle with the start of the offensive required a decisive massing of men and weapons. Thus, on the breakthrough sector of the First Ukrainian Front which was around 16 percent of its zone of advance, they concentrated 77 percent of the rifle divisions, 89 percent of the artillery and all the tanks. The operational densities on the breakthrough sectors of both fronts were 230-250 guns and mortars, 80-115 tanks and SAU per kilometer of front. The deep operational configuration of the fronts contributed to the launching of the strong splitting thrusts and to building up the effort. Each of these included a strong echelon and a mobile group, a second echelon, an air army and reserves.

The launching of a series of powerful thrusts led in the first stage of the operation to the splitting of the enemy defensive front. In the course of developing the operation, these thrusts merged into a single deep frontal splitting thrust of two cooperating fronts. Over the 23 days of the operation, the enemy suffered enormous losses. Twenty-five divisions were crushed and 35 completely destroyed. The enemy lost 147,500 men as prisoners alone. Some 14,000 guns and around 1,400 tanks were captured.

The method of splitting the strategic front of the enemy defenses was continuously improved, it was employed evermore effectively and decisively, the attack was launched against ever-larger groupings and the spatial scope of the attack increased. For example, in the Belgorod-Kharkov Operation the depth of the splitting thrust was 140 km, in the operation on the Right Bank Ukraine, it was 250 km, and over 500 km in the Vistula-Oder Operation.

As in the encirclement operations, a major role in splitting the enemy defensive front and defeating it was played by the massed employment of large formations of armored and mechanized troops in cooperation with the aviation and combined-arms armies.

The method of crushing thrusts also produced high results. This was employed most often when the enemy held a strong defense along a wide front, the configuration of the front line did not make it possible to carry out flanking attacks and the balance of forces and terrain conditions did not support the launching of strong splitting thrusts. Under such conditions, a series of powerful thrusts was launched on a wide front and on several axes with their continuation in depth along parallel and even divergent axes. As a result, the enemy front was initially broken up into parts and this brought about its crushing and the establishing of favorable conditions for a further offensive and for widening the individual wedges toward the flanks until they merged into a general breakthrough. The use of this method, in the first place, made it possible to conduct preparations for the operation more covertly and secondly prevented the Nazi Command from detecting the over-all plan of the operation.

The Battle of the Dnieper of 1943 is a series of offensive operations conducted in August-December in the aim of liberating the Left-Bank Ukraine, the Donbass and crossing the Dnieper. The offensive was carried out in a zone of over 1,000 km by the troops of five fronts: Central, Voronezh, Steppe, Southwestern and Southern (from 20 October 1943, respectively, the Belorussian and First, Second, Third and Fourth Ukrainian).

The going over to the offensive on the various axes was not simultaneous. The Donbass Operation of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts began on 13 August. The troops of the Central Front, having commenced the offensive on 26 August, were successful on the Konotop axis. By 31 August, the breakthrough of the enemy defenses had been widened to 100 km along the front and up to 70 km in depth. The Voronezh Front liberated Sumy and was advancing on Romny. The Steppe Front until the end of August was fighting to the west and southwest of Kharkov and, having broken the enemy resistance, at the beginning of September began an offensive against Krasnograd, Verkhnedneprovsk. The offensive by the five fronts broke up the enemy forces and tied down the maneuvering of its reserves. The well-known French historian A. Michel in his work "World War II" has pointed out: "Beginning from the summer of 1943, the Red Army initiated an offensive which spread like a tidal wave, initially with breaks and then non-stop...the Germans were powerless to check this flood..."(6)

Over the period from 22 through 30 September, the armies of the Central, Voronezh, Steppe and Southwestern Fronts reached the Dnieper along a 750-km front from Loyev to Zaporozhye and without a pause crossed the river, having captured a number of bridgeheads.

The launching of crushing thrusts was also characteristic of the Snolensk Offensive Operation conducted on 7 August-2 October 1943. The enemy defenses were breached on five sectors: four in the area of the Western

Front and one in the area of the Kalinin. The Smolensk Operation included four front operations unified by a common over-all plan: Spas-Demensk, Yelnya-Dorogobuzh, Dukhovshchina-Demidov and Smolensk-Roslavl.

The breaking up of the enemy troops and their piecemeal destruction produced high results: 7 divisions were defeated and 14 suffered a major defeat. The enemy was forced to shift 16 divisions from the Orel-Bryansk and other axes to the Smolensk area. As a total the Kalinin and Western Fronts tied down around 55 enemy divisions and this contributed to the successful conclusion of the Soviet troop counteroffensive in the Kursk Battle (12 July-23 August).

The enemy defensive front was crushed with great art in the Baltic Offensive Operation (14 September-24 November 1944) carried out by the Leningrad, Third, Second and First Baltic and the Third Belorussian Fronts as well as forces of the Baltic Fleet. This operation included four operations united by a common over-all plan: Riga, Tallinn, Moonsund Landing and Memel, and in the course of these the Baltic enemy grouping was broken up into parts and this significantly facilitated its defeat. The "iron barrier," as the Nazi generals boastfully called their defenses in the Baltic, had not held up. Some 26 divisions of Army Group North had been defeated and 3 were completely destroyed. Some 20 limping divisions were pushed into the Kurland Peninsula in the area between the towns of Tukums and Libau (Liyepaya). Here they were sealed off until the war's end and surrendered in May 1945.

In certain of the most important operations, the enemy grouping was defeated by a combination of different methods. Characteristic in this regard was the Belorussian Operation (23 June-29 August 1944). This was a fine example of not only surrounding a large grouping but a simultaneous breaching of the front on six far-apart sectors and which led to the breaking up of the enemy defenses into parts, to the scattering of its attention and efforts over a wide front and prevented the Nazi Command from organizing and carrying out major countermeasures to thwart the Soviet troop offensive.

The encirclement, breaking up and splitting of the enemy defensive front in this operation merged into a single continuous process. The over-all plan of Hq SHC had been initially to encircle and destroy the flank groupings of Army Group Center (Vitebsk and Bobruysk) in the tactical zone and thereby establish conditions for rapidly exploiting the success of the mobile groups of the fronts and armies along converging axes on Minsk in the area of surrounding and destroying the main forces of the 4th and 9th Nazi Armies in the operational depth.

By defeating the flanking enemy troop groupings in the area of Vitebsk and Bobruysk, they planned to cut through wide "gates" for a rapid advance of the large mobile forces of the Third and First Belorussian Fronts and for exploiting their success along converging axes.

This was a new qualitative shift in the theory and practice of operations to encircle the enemy: the creation of fixed pockets in the tactical zone and a "floating" one in the operational depth with the simultaneous destruction of the surrounded groupings in maximum short times without lowering the rate of advance of the troops on the external perimeter of encirclement.

The Belorussian Operation included ten operations united by a common over-all concept: Vitebsk-Orsha, Mogilev, Bobruysk, Polotsk, Minsk, Shyaulay, Vilnius, Kaunas, Belostok and Lublin-Brest. In the course of these operations the strategic enemy defensive front was broken up, its groupings were split, surrounded and successively destroyed (initially on the flanks of the Belorussian salient and then in the center, to the east of Minsk) under various conditions: in the tactical depth for the Vitebsk grouping (five divisions) and in the operational for the Bobruysk (six divisions) and Minsk groupings. For the first time in the history of military art, the 100,000-strong Minsk enemy grouping was surrounded and destroyed at a great depth (250 km). The splitting and destruction of the surrounded groupings occurred simultaneously with the rapid continuation of the offensive by the troops on the external perimeter. As a result, the time required to eliminate the surrounded groupings was shortened. Thus, to the east of Minsk the "floating" pocket was eliminated in 7 days while the Vitebsk and Bobruysk pockets were finished in 2.

Army Group Center had suffered a crushing defeat. Some 17 divisions and 3 brigades had been completely destroyed while 50 divisions had lost over one-half of their fighting strength. The Nazis lost around a half million men, killed, wounded and captured. In the estimate of the Nazi generals, the defeat of Army Group Center was a catastrophe surpassing the catastrophe at Stalingrad.

In skillfully resolving the problem of choosing a method to defeat the enemy in the strategic offensive operations (operations of groups of fronts), the Soviet Military Command achieved major results. Precisely due to this to a significant degree it was possible in the winter of 1942-1943 to defeat the entire southern wing of the Nazi troops including Army Groups A, B and Don; in the summer and autumn of 1944, Army Groups North, Center, Northern Ukraine and Southern Ukraine; in the winter and spring of 1943, Army Groups Center and Vistula.

Under today's conditions of rapid technical progress and accelerated development of the means of destruction the choice of the methods of defeating the enemy in strategic offensive operations has become more complex. Combat experience which must be employed creatively helps in resolving this problem. V.I. Lenin clearly defined the attitude to past experience. He pointed out that in practical work of today we must employ "not the letter but the spirit, the sense, the lessons of experience." (8)

Flight Performance of Long-Range Aviation Aircraft*

Type of aircraft	Take-off weight, kg	Engines	Crew	Maximum speed, km/hr	Range, km	Service ceiling, m	Number of machine guns (cannons) x caliber, m	Bombload, kg
IL-4	8,000	2	3	440	3,300	7,000	2 x 7.62	1000-2500
PE-8	27,000	4	10	440	4,800	10,300	3 x 7.62 2 x 20.0	2000-6000

* N.M. Skomorokhov, V.N. Chernetskiy, *Taktika v boyevykh primerakh (aviatsionnyy polk)* [Tactics in Combat Examples (Air Regiment)], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985, p 7.

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Footnotes

1. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945: Entsiklopediya" [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945: An Encyclopedia], Moscow, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1985, p 238.

2. "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva: Uchebnik dlya voyennykh akademiy Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil" [History of Military Art: Textbook for Military Academies of the Soviet Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 379.

3. "Sovetskaya Voenennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 6, 1978, p 37.

4. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 9, 1978, p 107.

5. A splitting thrust was employed usually on an operational-strategic scale in the aim of splitting the enemy grouping into isolated parts with their subsequent defeat one by one.

6. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny...." Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 7, 1976, p 199.

7. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna...." p 85.

8. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 43, p 200.

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Use of Long-Range Aviation to Disrupt Enemy Rail Traffic

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[Article by Col (Ret) N.I. Belousov, doctor of military sciences, and Col (Ret) M.A. Boguslavskiy, candidate of military sciences: "Experience of Employing Long-Range Aviation for Disrupting Enemy Rail Traffic"; prior to March 1942, this aviation was known as long-range bomber, from March 1942, long-range aviation, and from December 1944, the 18th Air Army. For convenience sake, the article uses long-range aviation]

[Text] The disruption of enemy rail traffic was one of the main tasks carried out during the years of the Great Patriotic War by the long-range aviation (ADD). The number of aircraft sorties made by the long-range bombers to carry out this mission was 30.6 percent of the total number.(1) The ADD aircraft fleet was basically represented by IL-4 and PE-8 aircraft (see the table) and the aim of their actions was to disrupt the delivery of enemy personnel, combat equipment, ammunition, fuel and materiel to the main operational axes. However, due to a number of factors, the efforts of the ADD aimed at carrying out this mission differed in the various periods of the war.

During the first period of the war, the ADD, due to the losses suffered in the air, did not have a sufficient amount of combat aircraft. Moreover, due to the complex situation on the Soviet-German Front, the ADD formations were employed to support the ground troops on the battlefield. Nevertheless, even under these conditions, the long-range bombers did not cease attacking enemy railroad installations. Here from July 1941, they operated chiefly at night.(2)

In September of 1941, it was established by all types of reconnaissance that after rebuilding the railroads on the captured territory, the enemy had begun widely employing rail transport to move reserves, fuel and ammunition. In the aim of stopping the traffic carried out in the

interests of the Nazi troops advancing on the Moscow axis, upon instructions of Hq SHC, a plan was worked out for ADD operations against major rail junctions on a broad front from Minsk to Daugavpils. However, it was impossible to carry this out fully, as the efforts of the ADD had to be concentrated on combating the tank columns advancing against Moscow. Only in September could all the forces (270 aircraft) operate against railroad facilities.(3) During the first 6 months of the war, the long-range bombers destroyed over 300 troop trains and 26 bridges.(4)

At the major stations of Minsk, Polotsk, Orsha, Vitebsk, Smolensk, Vyazma and Rzhev, air reconnaissance at the end of December 1941 discovered accumulations of enemy troop trains (the Nazi Command) had hurriedly shifted reserves in the aim of checking the Soviet troop advance at Moscow). For 15 nights, the ADD formations launched strikes at these rail junctions. More than 30 trains carrying personnel and equipment were destroyed and at many places the railroad structures and embankment were ruined. Here the bombers operated in small groups from a flight to a squadron from an altitude of 300-600 m.

Subsequently, the ADD began to be employed on a massed basis on the individual important axes. Thus, at the beginning of 1942, on the Smolensk—Vyazma Main-line, during a period of 4 nights, some 200 crews attacked around 140 trains (40 of these were burned up) and at 20 places destroyed the embankment.(5) As a result the trains were blocked up on this sector (around 25 in Vyazma alone) and against these the long-range bombers made repeated attacks. The mission set by Headquarters of preventing enemy traffic along the main line was basically carried out.

The ADD formations from March through June 1942 conducted combat operations in the interests of many fronts. On the northwestern sector, some 370 aircraft sorties were made to disrupt traffic. The rail junctions of Luga, Pskov, Dno, Idritsa, Staraya Russa, Nevel and many stations were subjected to attack. On the western sector, the long-range bombers made 840 aircraft sorties. The aim of these operations was to thwart the enemy's plan to concentrate forces to outflank Moscow from the northwest and southwest.

From 18 June through 18 July, there were continuous attacks on the rail junctions of the Voronezh axis: Bryansk, Orel, Ogor, Kursk, Kastornoye and the station of Shchigry. The pilots made 1,920 aircraft sorties and dropped 2,353 tons of bombs. Here they bombed Orel 32 times, Kursk 21 and Bryansk 16 times. All in all, the raids involved, respectively, 450, 568 and 454 aircraft. The effectiveness of the air strikes can be seen from the fact that in June alone at the Bryansk rail junction alone, they destroyed 15 troop trains (around 500 cars, 400 tons of fuel and over 3,000 killed and wounded).(6)

Along with launching massed raids the method of "lone-wolf operations" was also widely used. Individual crews also operated at night. They destroyed trains on the sections and at stations and knocked out embankments, station structures and bridges. It was extremely difficult to destroy a bridge with conventional high-explosive or fragmentation bombs. Even with a precise hit the bombs frequently slipped between the bridge beams without causing any damage. In line with this, upon orders of the ADD Command, industry began manufacturing a special bridge bomb, the MAB-250 with catches that held it to the beams.

In order to effectively employ the new weapon, it was essential to work out the corresponding tactics for the long-range bombers. In the course of carrying out a flight experiment at one of the ranges, where they had built a dummy railroad bridge, it was learned that the bridge bombs should be dropped from low altitudes (to 200-500 m). This ensured high accuracy of their hitting the target but did not guarantee crew safety from being hit by fragments. For this reason, the bombs were dropped by parachutes and because of this the drop time was increased. The ADD Command quickly sent out the practical recommendations obtained as a result of the testing to all flight personnel as a guide for action.

The systematic ADD raids and their high effectiveness forced the Nazi Command to strengthen air defenses for major rail installations. In response to these measures, the battle formations of the long-range bombers began to include special groups for neutralizing the air defenses and consisting of three or four aircraft. For destroying the anti-aircraft batteries and searchlights, the crews of the groups employed high explosive (FAB) and fragmentation bombs (AO) and for blinding their crews and supporting aiming, illuminating bombs were employed (SAB). The higher density of the strikes also helped to reduce losses. This was achieved by vertical separation of the aircraft in the groups (two or three levels) and reducing the time distances between them to 15-20 seconds. By the autumn of 1942, the formations of the long-range bombers consisted of weather reconnaissance crews, target illuminating crews, groups for neutralizing air defenses at the objectives, strike groups and crews monitoring the results of the strikes.

In the second period of the Great Patriotic War, ADD operations to disrupt train traffic assumed a significantly greater scale. This was caused by the successes of the Soviet Army, by the increased size of the aircraft fleet as well as by the greater effectiveness and stability in controlling the long-range bombers.

Upon instructions of Headquarters, the ADD Command in the first half of 1943 conducted an independent air operation to thwart enemy operational rail traffic on the western sector in a zone of 800 km along the front and up to 400 km in depth. The aim of the latter was to prevent the Nazis from preparing for the summer offensive, to defeat their groupings and provide the Soviet troops with

conditions for going over to a counteroffensive. The ADD Staff in accord with the received directive worked out a plan for the operation and this set out what rail junctions should be attacked and when, what formations should operate against which installations and with what forces. In this manner a new form of the operational employment of the ADD was realized.

Over a period of several months, in the aim of bombing railroad installations, more than 15,000 aircraft sorties were made. Raids were made on 47 junctions and stations many of which, particularly on the Brest—Bryansk—Orel Mainline were hit repeatedly. Thus, Gomel, a major juncture linking the railroads handling traffic simultaneously on several routes, was bombed 27 times. These raids involved 1,640 bombers. The enemy suffered significant damage. For example, just during the night of 7 March 1943, as a result of bomb hits on troop trains, 17 tank cars with gasoline burned up, 15 cars with ammunition, 25 with building materials and 26 with troop supplies. Moreover, 4 dumps and over 100 Nazis were destroyed.⁽⁷⁾ The Bryansk rail junction was hit 36 times and Orel 63 times with the forces, respectively, of 2,852 and 2,060 aircraft. Such systematic raids by the ADD thwarted planned enemy traffic and impeded the concentration of its troops and materiel. This was one of the reasons why the Nazi Command shifted several times the date for the start of the Kursk offensive.

In the third period of the Great Patriotic War, operations to disrupt enemy rail traffic assumed even a wider scope. In 1944 alone, more than 24,000 aircraft sorties were made to attack rail junctions. In a number of the offensive operations of our troops, from three to seven air corps were involved in carrying out this mission (at Leningrad and Novgorod). At certain stages of the Belorussian Operation, all eight ADD air corps were involved. How did the tactics of the long-range bombers develop here?

With the complete transition to nighttime operations, because of the primitiveness of the navigation equipment on the long-range bombers, major difficulties arose in locating the target, coming in over them and aiming. The coming in to the area of railroad installations was basically achieved by calculating the time with a subsequent adjustment of the position of the set targets from characteristic ground marks illuminated by a series of SAB. In certain instances when the installations were not far from the front line, radio equipment was employed (the RPK-2 aircraft radio compass and ground radio beacons of the Kolba and 13-A-1 type). With their aid the target area was reached following a precalculated radio heading and then the coordinates were also clarified visually.

In order to increase bombing accuracy, the strikes were made, as a rule, against previously illuminated targets. The carrying out of this task was entrusted to the illuminating crews (two or three). One of them called the

leader reached the objective slightly ahead and illuminated it dropping the SAB from an outside mounting. Then considering the deviations made, the SAB were dropped from the inner mounting and the information on the illuminating of the target was transmitted to the commander of the strike group. The remaining illuminating crews dropped their bombs in series following the data of the leader, illuminating the target over the entire time of the strike.

The correct choice of variations of a bombload also helped to increase the effectiveness of the strikes. The basic weapon was different caliber, high-explosive bombs (from 100 to 1,000 kg). However, up to 30 percent of the entire bombload was made up of incendiary (ZAB-100) and fragmentation high-explosive (OFAB-100) bombs. As a result the objectives were destroyed both by the destructive action of the FAB as well as from the arising fires and shrapnel. For increasing the duration of effect on the objectives, the bomb fuzes were set with a varying delay. This also led to a delay in reconstruction work.

The bombing altitudes were set considering the dependable locating of the target and aiming, possible counteraction from enemy air defenses, the combat capabilities of the employed weapons as well as ensuring the greatest probability of hitting the objectives. Strikes with high explosive and incendiary bombs under visual flying conditions were made from an altitude of 2,500-4,000 m and under instrument flying conditions and employing bridge bombs, 400-500 m and less. For preventing a mid-air collision of the aircraft in the target area each attack group was given a time and a direction for approaching the target while the aircraft in battle formation were separated in altitude every 150-300 m.

In order to exclude routine in the actions, the pilots in repeat strikes against the same targets altered the routes and flight profile as well as the direction of the bombing run. For scattering the antiaircraft fire and overcoming enemy fighter operations, they frequently practiced star raids against objectives (from different directions and at different altitudes), approaching the target from enemy territory, sorties of feint groups, spurious radio traffic and pre-emptive strikes against the base airfields of the Nazi fighter aviation.

The ADD commander received instructions for operations to disrupt rail traffic from Hq SHC. After assessing the situation and working out a plan of action, he took a decision to carry out the set mission. Based upon the decision, the staff sections and services under the leadership of the chief of staff began the planning. They determined the specific tasks and the time of the strikes for each formation and unit, allocated the routes between them, carried out the necessary calculations and worked out measures for the types of support.

The commander's decision was drawn up as a battle order or battle instruction and these were issued to the formation commanders. In addition, instructions were appended on navigation support, a list and data for the work of the ZOS (ground aircraft navigation support) facilities, diagrams and data on alternate airfields, diagrams for designating the front line and other documents. In the aim of accelerating the preparation of the air units for taking off, the ADD staff, as a rule, issued preliminary orders. Subsequently, the tasks when necessary were adjusted over communications equipment (high-frequency, radio and telegraph).

The combat of the ADD formations was controlled initially from one command post located in Moscow. However, with the moving of the front line to the west it became difficult to control the long-range bombers. For this reason in the base area of a majority of the formations, they set up a ADD forward control post (PPU) where the commander or his deputy remained. In a number of major operations on an individual most important operational axis, an auxiliary control post (VPU) was established and this functioned independently or together with the front VPU. As a rule, the deputy commander was located at it with a group of officers. He maintained contact with the ADD staff, he forwarded there instructions received from the representatives of Hq SHC and requests of the front, he received new tasks and issued them to the commanders of the air formations. In special instances the deputy commander was empowered to retarget the attack groups of long-range bombers in the air. The crews were controlled directly by the commanders of the air units from their command posts as well as by the leaders of the battle formations.

Thus, the long-range aviation disrupted enemy rail traffic during the war years in a form of conducting independent air operations and systematic combat on crucial axes by launching massed strikes against a limited number of objectives. Much of the acquired experience at present has not lost its practical significance for training the air formations and units of the long-range and strategic missile-carrying bombers, for example, the procedure for organizing combat, the composition of the battle formations, the necessity of focusing efforts on hitting the primary objectives (the massing of forces) and so forth.

Footnotes

1. I.V. Timokhovich, "Operativnoye iskusstvo Sovetskikh VVS v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Operational Art of the Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 246.

2. See: M.N. Kozhevnikov, "Komandovaniye i shtab VVS Sovetskoy Armii v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Nauka, 1985, p 41.

3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 35, inv. 107559, file 5, sheet 169.

4. A.D. Tsykin, "Ot 'Ili Muromtsa' do raketonostsa" [From the "Ilya Muromets" to a Missile-Carrying Aircraft], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, p 100.

5. TsAMO, folio 35, inv. 11290, file 146, sheets 69, 82.

6. A.D. Tsykin, op. cit., p 102.

7. TsAMO, folio 35, inv. 11495, file 13, sheet 33.

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Organization of Signals in Fighting in Large City
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21 Sep 87) pp 38-44

[Article by Col V.P. Zaytsev, candidate of historical sciences: "From the Experience of Organizing Communications in Conducting Combat in a Large City"]

[Text] During the years of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet troops conducted combat not only under field conditions but also in population points. In our view, special attention should be given to the experience of fighting in large cities. This showed that armed combat in a city not only differs in the characteristic tactical procedures for the offense and defense but also has a substantial impact upon the organization of troop command, the organizing of signals and the use of communications equipment.

For the first time during the war the skills of organizing communications under urban conditions were gained in the defense of Stalingrad. The experience gained here was later successfully employed by the signal troops in the storming of Konigsberg, Budapest, Berlin and other large cities. An elucidation of this experience is the aim of the current article.

Troop control in fighting in a city was a more complicated and dynamic process than under ordinary field conditions. For this reason to provide this a network of additional control posts was organized. For example, in the 62d Army which was defending Stalingrad there were three control posts, the command post, the alternate command post and the auxiliary command post and when the enemy occupied the southern and in part the central portions of the city, on the left bank of the Volga, another second alternate command post was established.(1) In the LXXIX Rifle Corps of the 3d Assault Army for ensuring firm, flexible and continuous troop control and their outflanking actions in storming the Reichstag, in addition to a command post they organized two observation posts.(2) In the storming of

Konigsberg, control of the troops of the 39th Army was provided from a command post, from the positions of the operations group and from three observation posts.

The system of control posts in combat in a city was organized in such a manner as to provide the largest number of wire communications channels with the subordinate formations (units).

Since under urban conditions observance of the battlefield was strictly limited, the control posts were brought as close as possible to the forward edge of one's troops (the contact line with the enemy). In particular, in the defense of Stalingrad, the command post of the 62d Army which during the period of fierce fighting against the Nazis in the area of the Barrikady Plant was just 800 m from the forward line. The command posts of the field force's rifle divisions were located 200-300 m away from the forward edge. In the course of the fighting for Konigsberg, Budapest and Berlin, the operations groups of the army command posts were 1-2 km from the corps staffs while the command posts of the corps and divisions in advancing toward the center of the city averaged 3-3.5 km from the front line. The distance between the corps command posts and the divisional command posts was 0.5-3 km. Thus, in the storming of Berlin, the operations groups of the army staffs were positioned 1.5-2 km from the corps staffs which, in turn, were 0.5-1.5 km from the divisional staffs.(3)

The observation posts of the rifle corps and divisions were set up some 500-1,000 m away from the front line, and for the rifle regiments at a distance of 150-400 m from the forward edge. For example, in the fighting for Budapest, the regimental commanders chose the position of the observation post some 150-300 m away from the forward edge of their troops and were often directly in their battle formations.(4) The commanders of the rifle battalions (assault detachments) set up their observation posts in the company battle formations.

In organizing troop control in the course of offensive fighting in a city, the control posts were moved much more frequently than under field conditions: in the divisions one or two times a day and in the regiments (excluding the fighting for Budapest) two or three times a day. The move was made over short distances.

In fighting in a large city for ensuring troop command all types of communications were employed but radio and wire communications were used most widely.

Wire communications in the armies, corps and divisions was organized by main arteries and links. In a majority of instances this was provided from the command (auxiliary) and observation control posts over two or three communications channels with the extensive use of communications centers and test points. Thus, in the 62d Army in the defense of Stalingrad, wire communications was organized from the command to the auxiliary post by a main artery and from the auxiliary

command post to the formations by links.(5) The command post and the auxiliary control post were connected by connecting lines with the alternate command posts which were on the left bank of the Volga. For contact with the group of Col S.F. Gorokhov (124th and 149th Rifle Brigades) and the 138th Rifle Division of Col I.I. Lyudnikov which had been cut off by the enemy from the main army forces, from the alternate command post across the Volga special cable lines were laid and on the banks of the river they set up auxiliary communications centers and test points.

In the course of the defense of Stalingrad, wire communications were also organized not only with the regiments and battalions but also with the rifle platoons and even the squads.

Wire communications of the 11th Guards Army in the storming of Konigsberg was organized from the command and observation posts. The command post of the field force had two or three wire communications channels with the corps staffs and one or two channels with the observation post of the corps commanders. The communications center of the operations group of the army command post maintained wire contact with the observation post of the commanders of the first echelon divisions fighting on the main axis as well as with the staff of the Third Belorussian Front and the observation post of the front commander.

We should note the organization of wire communications in the LXXIX Rifle Corps of the 3d Assault Army in the storming of the Reichstag. The presence of a command post and two observation posts in the formation made it possible to provide communication of the corps command post with the command posts of the rifle divisions (over telephone and telegraph channels), and from both corps observation posts with their observation posts over a double-wire line. The communications centers of the command and observation posts of the corps were interconnected. The corps observation posts also had telephone contact with the commanders of the 380th and 674th Rifle Regiments which were storming the Reichstag. This made it possible to provide uninterrupted troop control.(6)

Wire communications in the rifle divisions also, as a rule, was organized from the command and observation posts. The methods of organizing this in the course of the fighting in a city varied. With a comparatively high rate of advance for the units of the formation, with a narrow zone of advance and a shortage of wire facilities, communications of the command post with the regiments was organized by links with the providing of connecting lines from them to the observation post of the divisional commander. However, such a method did not provide dependable troop control due to the shortage of bypass routes.

Wire communications in the divisions was provided with the regiments and by links with the observation post of the formation's commander. In this instance with the presence of radial lines converging on the control post of the main communications artery, the divisional commander had available bypass communications lines. But the optimum method for organizing wire communications in the rifle divisions and which gained particularly wide use in the fighting for Königsberg was communications by links with two control posts, the command post and observation post. This made it possible for the formation commander to establish contact with each regiment over three channels.

In a rifle regiment in fighting in a city the organization of wire communications depended upon the procedure for moving the control posts. If a regiment was assaulting objectives along one or two streets, then communication with the battalions was organized from the observation post of the unit's commander by links and the regiment's command post maintained telephone contact with the observation post over two or three channels. However, the most dependable wire communications was when this was organized by links to the rifle battalions (assault detachments) from the command and observation posts of the regiment's commander and the communications links were provided with connecting lines making it possible to have bypass routes from any control post.

The wire telephone communications in a rifle battalion (assault detachment) was usually organized, as the experience of the storming of Königsberg, Budapest and Berlin shows, by links. As a rule, a communications link was organized to one of the two most distant rifle companies (assault groups) from the command post of the battalion commander. The commander himself of the battalion (assault detachment) was in the battle formations of the subunit under one of the companies (assault groups). Sometimes only one link was organized to the commander of the head assault group and from him a connecting line went to the commander of the other. In certain instances for more dependable control of the assault groups, two lines were run to each of them over different links.

In organizing wire communications in the course of the fighting in a large city, field cable lines were employed most widely, as the search for routes to build pole lines caused significant difficulties and the permanent wire lines were built and employed basically in organizing communications on the front and army levels.

It was very difficult to lay cable lines under the conditions of a large city because of fires accompanied by the collapsing of buildings, as well as from the effect of artillery mortar fire and the fire of enemy submachine gunners and snipers. However, the Soviet signal troops successfully employed the cable laying methods worked out by combat practice and these increased their invulnerability and made it possible to reduce the losses of the personnel servicing them. In the course of the fighting in

large cities, the cable lines wherever possible were laid through communicating basements, utility lines, underground passages, sewer pipes, through openings in the walls of buildings, and in Berlin, through the subway tunnels.(7)

Most often the signal troops laid wire lines along the streets, stretching the cable along the side exposed to heavy enemy fire. The cable was fastened to the foundations of the buildings or laid in drainage ditches. The lines were suspended only at points where they crossed streets.(8) If a street was sufficiently wide, for building an overhead crossing they used the supports of a streetcar line or the power transmission line. When the enemy was firing on the street from small arms and it was difficult to rush across it, the cable of the wire communications line was moved across with the aid of a special weight. For this one of the signal troops made his way around to the nearest building on the opposite side, while a second raised the cable to the upper floor of the building where he was, fastened a weight to the end of the cable and threw it across the exposed street.(9)

The cable lines were also laid between the tracks of the municipal rail and streetcar lines.(10) Here the signal troops endeavored to compress the cable to the track on the unfired-on side. A cable communications line put up in this manner was rather dependable as only a direct hit by a shell or bomb would lead to a disruption of communications.

For laying wire communications lines in the course of the fighting in Königsberg, Budapest and Berlin, they frequently employed the gardens, parks and boulevards. Here, in order to avoid damage of the cable by tank, SAU and motor vehicles, it was laid 15-20 m away from the pathways and avenues.

In the aim of maintaining continuous operation of the cable communications lines, great attention was given to the correct positioning of the control posts. The posts usually were established at the end of each block at crossings of the street in such a manner as to be able to see adjacent blocks and view down the street where the line was laid. At points of probable enemy sabotage as well as those most frequently exposed to heavy artillery shelling, auxiliary posts (listening posts) were also set up. The signals troops of the auxiliary posts observed sections of line 50-100 m long from shelters. Having detected damage, they quickly eliminated this and returned to the shelter.(11)

In fighting in a city, in the event of damage to the wires, it was important to correctly determine to whom they belonged. For this purpose the signal troops basically laid the lines along those streets where the assault detachment of their unit was to advance, they assigned the sides of the street ahead of time for laying and suspending the cable, assigning one of these especially for the artillery communications lines. Also effective was the use of tags and different-colored ribbons with the names of the

chiefs of the signals links and fastened to the cable and at the fastening points of the lines.(12) In order to more easily determine to whom the line belonged, in storming Budapest, they employed cables with a vinylchloride colored insulating.

For example, in the rifle units wherever possible they used cable with a green insulating and in the artillery, red.

For building permanent wire communications lines, as combat experience in a large city was to show, they chose the most convenient banks of canals, parks and boulevards. In the fighting for Berlin, the main arteries of the permanent communications lines of the armies were also built along the railroads.

When a permanent line was being built along a street, they chose a route which would require a smaller expenditure of energies on digging up the paving stones and asphalt. This was built in such a manner as not to impede the traffic of combat equipment and transport and have maximum protection against enemy fire. In building the permanent lines, at times for quickly setting up the wire communications, instead of a metal wire on supports, they hung a field wire which after the line went into operation was used as an alternate communications channel and not taken down.

In a number of instances the local communications lines and facilities were also employed for wire communications (Stalingrad, Berlin).

In organizing wire communications, great attention was given to ensuring the security of the communications centers and the monitoring telephone exchanges (KTS). These were located, as a rule, in basements or underground quarters of strong buildings protected by other structures from the direction of the most probable enemy artillery fire strikes and having safe approaches to them.(13) Sometimes they were set up in specially equipped dugouts.(14) The lines running to the communications center were camouflaged and all elements of the center carefully guarded.

In the course of the fighting for large cities, extensive use was made of radio communications. On the army level, this was provided over radio nets and radio links which employed shortwave, ultra-shortwave and vehicle-mounted radios. Thus, in the radio nets of the command post of the 62d Army in the defense of Stalingrad, they employed only the shortwave radios of the RB type. These provided radio contact with the divisions, the artillery, the riverboats, the crossings, with the troop group of Col S.F. Gorokhov and the 138th Rifle Division of Col I.I. Lyudnikov. The staff of the Stalingrad Front maintained contact with the group of Col S.F. Gorokhov with a RBM radio. The vehicle-mounted radios of the army were in the alternate radio communications center located on the left bank of the Volga.(15)

In the storming of Königsberg, Budapest and Berlin, for ensuring flexible troop command at the command posts of the field forces they established radio nets using different power radios including the shortwave of the RB and RBM type and medium-power, vehicle-mounted ones of the RSB type. In addition, in the storming of Königsberg, they organized radio nets with ultra-shortwave radios of the A-7 type. In addition to the radio nets for contacting the corps, the armies also set up radio links.

Radio communications with the troops on the corps level was carried out, as a rule, by the radio net of the staffs using radios of the RSB type and the radio net of the formation commanders with the RB and RBM radios. In the storming of important objectives, they sometimes established special nets or radio links. For example, in the storming of the Reichstag in the LXXIX Rifle Corps, using radios of the ultra-shortwave band they organized a separate radio net which included the radios of the formation commander and the commanders of the regiments carrying out the assault.(16)

In the rifle divisions radio communications was organized over the nets from the command and observation posts. If there was little radio equipment, one radio net was established and the radios of the division commander, the staff of the formation and the regimental commanders were connected to this. In certain instances the radio equipment of the division and of the attached and supporting units made it possible to establish two radio nets (of the formation commander and the staff) with the assigning of radio links to one of the regiments fighting on the main axis. For example, this was how radio communications was organized in the 39th Guards Rifle Division of the 8th Guards Army in the storming of Berlin.

In a rifle regiment, in the storming of the city, radio communications was organized, as a rule, by radio nets, the number of which depended upon the number of assault detachments. Here one net existed for two detachments. In the assault detachments they established one radio net which included the radios of the detachment commander and the commanders of the assault groups. The artillery radios usually made up a second radio net.

In using radios under urban conditions, a number of difficulties arose related primarily to the reduced operating range and interference. The experience of the fighting in Stalingrad, Berlin, Budapest, Königsberg and other cities confirmed that as a result of the heavy absorption of the emitted electromagnetic energy by the buildings and structures, the operating range of the radios was reduced and in locating the latter in underground quarters radio communication was completely broken off. Great interference also arose with radio reception. This developed basically with the operating of power plants, electrical units at operating enterprises as well as because of the reciprocal influence of the large

numbers of operating radios in the battle formations of our own and the enemy troops. Under these conditions, the signal troops sought out the best places for setting up the radios, they carried the antennas up to the roofs of the buildings, they used the long-wave section of the radio band and so forth. The vehicle-mounted radios were usually set up in large courtyards of buildings, on squares and boulevards, in parks and gardens. They were located there in specially dug shelters and carefully camouflaged. The upper stories and attics of buildings were the best place for setting up low-power radios. But since the control post of the commander directing combat was frequently located on the first floor or in the basement, in the basement there was an additional receiver tuned to the wavelength of the radio. A telephone hook-up was installed between it and the radio.(17) The commander could hear all the reports using the receiver and he transmitted orders to the radio by telephone. The receiver made it possible for him to monitor the transmitted text.(18) This method was employed most effectively in using the RBM radio.

When the conditions for setting up the command and observation posts made it possible to employ directional antennas, radio communication was dependable even when the radio was set up in the basement. If there was no such opportunity, they employed a vertical beam some 10-35 m long fastened to the roof of the building.(19)

In the course of the fighting for a large city, the amateur antennas located on the roofs of residential buildings were used rather successfully.

Special attention should be given to the experience of employing radios operating on the ultra-shortwave band for controlling the combat of the assault detachments and groups. Practice showed that if such a radio were set up inside a brick or wooden building with an iron roof, the most effective was to direct its wave antenna out through a window or opening facing the user.(20)

The employment of **mobile communications facilities** also had its particular features. The use of these to a significant degree was impeded by barricades and rubble of destroyed buildings, by fires, by sabotage on bridges, by the intensive traffic of our combat equipment and transport as well as by ambushes set up by the enemy.(21)

Foot messengers were the most important mobile means of communications in the hands of the commander of a regiment or battalion (assault group). The threat of an attack by enemy sabotage groups necessitated their use in pairs. The messengers usually moved a certain distance apart in order that in the event of encountering the enemy one of them could initiate combat and the second could continue to carry out the battle task.(22)

Armored vehicles, motorcycles and motor vehicles were employed as mobile communications facilities in a rifle division, in a corps as well as in the operational field

forces. The delivery of documents with their aid was basically carried out at night after careful reconnaissance of the route. As a rule, two routes were chosen for one destination. Couriers were always sent with an escort. Where it was impossible to travel in a conveyance, they made their way on foot.

The report assembly posts were located close to the command posts on the main routes of advance of the troops. In locating these they considered the presence of safe approach routes. Usually they were in buildings or shelters located in the rear part of the command or observation post.

Liaison aircraft were also employed in the storming of a city. As a rule, they landed at race courses, stadiums, large sports fields, and sometimes on wide boulevards and streets.

Thus, all types of communications were employed for troop control in the course of fighting in large cities, as under field conditions. However, there were certain particular features in the employment of radio and wire communications. In particular, to ensure dependable operation of wire communications its organization in all the tactical elements was carried out solely by links with the extensive employment of bypass lines. For control of the troops assaulting important objectives, with the aid of radios in the corps and divisional elements they established special radio nets and links which included the radios of the commanders of the units participating in the storming.

The specific urban conditions also influenced the use of means of communications. For example, in organizing wire communications they employed chiefly cable lines which were laid in areas protected against enemy actions. Of the radios they most widely employed the shortwave and ultra-shortwave radios.

The methods of organizing communications in fighting in a city have not lost their timeliness under present-day conditions.

Footnotes

1. "Voyennyye svyazisty v boyakh za Rodinu" [Signal Troops in the Battles for the Motherland], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 138.

2. "Istoriya razvitiya voysk svyazi" [History of the Development of Signal Troops], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1980, p 253.

3. Ibid., p 266.

4. "Budapesht, Vena, Praga" [Budapest, Vienna, Prague], Moscow, Nauka, 1965, p 168.

5. "Istoriya razvitiya voysk...." p 149.

6. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 71, inv. 12169, file 23, sheet 2.

7. "Voyennyye svyazisty v dni voyny i mira" [Signal Troops During Days of War and Peace], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 169; "Voyennyye svyazisty v boyakh...." pp 199-201.

8. TsAMO, folio 233, inv. 2372, file 281, sheet 29.

9. I.T. Peresyarkin, "Svyaz v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Signals in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Nauka, 1973, p 246.

10. TsAMO, folio 233, inv. 2372, file 280, sheet 12.

11. Ibid., sheet 29.

12. I.T. Peresyarkin, op. cit., p 246.

13. TsAMO, folio 320, inv. 4538, file 27, sheets 14-18.

14. I.T. Peresyarkin, op. cit., p 135; TsAMO, folio 71, inv. 12169, file 123, sheet 2.

15. "Voyennyye svyazisty v boyakh...." pp 138-139.

16. "Voyennyye svyazisty v dni...." p 241.

17. TsAMO, folio 71, inv. 12191, file 119, sheet 8.

18. Ibid., sheet 6.

19. Ibid., sheet 5.

20. Ibid., file 115, sheet 4.

21. Ibid., folio 233, inv. 2372, file 281, sheet 36.

22. Ibid., file 282, sheet 36.

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What Happened at Kharkov in May 1942

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[Article, published under the heading "Little Known Pages of Military History," by Maj Gen (Ret) S.F. Begunov, candidate of military sciences, docent: "What Happened at Kharkov in May 1942"]

[Text] On 12 May 1942, at the peak of the unsuccessful fighting for the Crimean Front on the Kerch Peninsula, there began the Kharkov Offensive Operation of the Southwestern Front. The Soviet Command placed good hopes on this operation, planning to seize initiative in the south by launching anticipatory strikes against the

Nazi troops. However, the enemy also on 17 May began an offensive in the Kharkov area. In the ensuing engagement, the Soviet troops were defeated and pushed back beyond the Severskiy Donets. We would like to investigate how this happened in the proffered article.

In the second half of March 1942, the Military Council of the Southwestern Sector (commander-in-chief, MSU S.K. Timoshenko, military council member N.S. Khrushchev and chief of staff, Lt Gen I.Kh. Bagramyan), in reporting on the situation and the prospects of combat, proposed to the Supreme High Command that an offensive operation be conducted using the forces of the Bryansk, Southwestern and Southern Fronts in the aim of defeating the opposing enemy forces and the subsequent reaching by our troops of the line of Gomel, Kiev, Cherkassy, Pervomaysk, Nikolayev.(1) The command of the sector requested additional forces from Headquarters. The General Staff, having reviewed the proposal of the sector military council, reported to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief its disagreement and the impossibility of conducting a major offensive operation in the south in the spring of 1942.(2) Since Headquarters at that time did not possess sufficient reserves to reinforce the Southwestern Sector, it agreed with the opinion of the General Staff. But I.V. Stalin issued instructions to the commander-in-chief of the sector to work out and conduct a partial operation in order to defeat at least the Kharkov enemy grouping with the troops at his disposal, to liberate Kharkov and establish conditions for a further offensive against Dnepropetrovsk.

The over-all concept of the operation envisaged that the Southwestern Front would launch two strikes on converging axes toward Kharkov: the main one by the forces of the 6th Army and the operations group of Maj Gen L.V. Bobkin from the Barvenkovo Salient and an auxiliary one by the forces of the 28th Army and the adjacent flanking formations of the 21st and 38th Armies from the area of Volchansk. The troops on the right wing of the Southern Front (commander, Lt Gen R.Ya. Malinovsky) by a strong defense of the southern side of the Barvenkovo Salient were to support the main grouping of the Southwestern Front from the south.(3)

The breaching of the enemy defenses was to be carried out by the rifle formations reinforced by tank subunits on sectors from Volchansk to Bolshiye Babki (54 km) and from the Barvenkovo Salient from Verkhniy Bishkin to Mironovka (36 km). After the armies had carried out the immediate tasks the XXI and XXIII Tank Corps (commanders, respectively, Maj Gens Tank Trps G.I. Kuzmin and Ye.G. Pushkin) were to be committed to the breach in the zone of the 6th Army (commander, Lt Gen A.M. Gorodnyanskiy), while the VI Cavalry Corps (commander, Maj Gen A.A. Noskov) and a tank brigade would be committed in the zone of the operations group and the III Guards Cavalry Corps (commander, Maj Gen V.D. Kryuchenkin) in the zone of the 28th Army (commander, Lt Gen D.I. Ryabyshev). They were to continue the success on converging axes toward Kharkov.(4)

The Chief of the General Staff, MSU B.M. Shaposhnikov, in considering the riskiness of an offensive from an operational pocket which the Barvenkovo Salient was for the Southwestern Front, again proposed abandoning the Kharkov Operation. However, the high command of the sector continued to insist on its proposal and assured I.V. Stalin that the operation would be completely successful. Then he gave permission to carry it out.(5)

The Nazi Command was also preparing an offensive operation in the Kharkov area under the code name *Fridericus-I* and the start of this had been set for 18 May. The aim of the operation was to eliminate the Soviet troop bridgehead in the area of Barvenkovo, Lozovaya and to capture an advantageous line for continuing a further offensive to the left bank of the *Severskiy Donets*. The Barvenkovo Salient was to be eliminated by the enemy by pincer strikes against Izyum: one by the forces of the 6th Field Army from the Balakleya area and the other by the forces of Army Group Kleist (1st Panzer and 17th Armies) from the areas of Slaviansk, Aleksandrovka.

Thus, in the area of Kharkov and the Barvenkovo Salient both sides were preparing simultaneously to carry out offensive actions. The further development of events on the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front in the summer and autumn of 1942 would depend to a significant degree upon the outcome of the operations in this area.

The balance of forces on the southwestern sector by the start of the Kharkov Operation was not in favor of the Soviet troops. For tanks this was equal, but in terms of personnel the enemy surpassed us by 1.1-fold, in guns and mortars by 1.3-fold and in aircraft by 1.6-fold. Only in the zone of advance of the Southwestern Front had it been possible to achieve a superiority over the enemy of 1.5-2-fold for personnel and tanks. In terms of the amount of artillery and aviation, the forces were approximately equal. The Southern Front was significantly inferior to the enemy in both tanks, artillery and aviation. In particular, on the southern face of the Barvenkovo Salient the Nazis surpassed the 57th and 9th Armies by 1.3-fold for infantry, by 4.4-fold for tanks and by 1.7-fold for artillery.(6)

The Southwestern Front had to breach enemy defenses consisting of a main zone 8-12 km deep, switch positions as well as second and third zones. For breaching these, the Southwestern Front had been reinforced by 32 artillery regiments (18 regiments from the reserve of Headquarters and 14 from the Southern Front). But because of the bad organization of the regrouping (the staff of the front had not worked out a general plan for it), by the start of the offensive only 17 regiments had taken up their firing positions out of the 32. Some 11 regiments were in the concentration areas 12-15 km from the firing positions, while 4 had not arrived at all at the breakthrough sectors. As a whole, around 34 percent of the total number of artillery and mortar weapons did not

participate in the artillery offensive on the first day of the operation. The actual artillery density per kilometer of breakthrough sector was: 23.6 guns and mortars in the 21st Army, 59.5 in the 28th Army, 18.7 in the 38th Army and 32 in the 6th Army and operations group.(7)

The basic mass of tanks (560 out of 925) had been assigned to the first echelon for close support of the infantry. On the breakthrough sectors they had concentrated: 3.5 tanks per kilometer of front in the 21st Army, 12 in the 28th Army, 5 in the 38th Army, 6.4 in the 6th Army and 4 in the operations group.(8) Seven tank and 3 motorized rifle brigades comprising the tank and cavalry corps (324 tanks) were to be employed for continuing the offensive after breaching the enemy defenses.

The air forces of the Southwestern Front were reinforced from the Southern Front with 233 aircraft which, remaining under the commander of the Southern Front Air Forces, were to support the offensive of the southern assault grouping of the Southwestern Front. All the aviation was distributed to the armies. At the same time, the tasks were set for it not only by the army commanders but also by the front commanders.

The combat training of the troops and staffs for the forthcoming offensive, upon instructions of the commander-in-chief of the Southwestern Sector, was planned for the period from 1 through 15 April. However, a significant portion of the measures remained unfulfilled because of the expenditure of a large amount of time on the regrouping of the troops.

A characteristic feature in the organization of troop control was the fact that the commander-in-chief of the sector and the chief of staff were simultaneously the commander and chief of staff of the Southwestern Front, respectively. Such a combining of functions had a negative effect upon the situation and actions of the Southern Front.

The staffs of the divisions, armies and the front were located an unjustifiably great distance away from the first echelon troops. For example, the distance from the army command personnel to the front line was as follows: 30 km for the command post of the 28th Army, 30 km for the auxiliary command post (VPU); 40 km for the command post of the 6th Army and 22 km for the VPU; 20 km for the command post of the operations group (a VPU was not organized there). In a majority of formations, the divisional command posts were 4 km from the forward edge, and in some they were 8-10 km away. In the course of the offensive these were to be moved at the discretion of the divisional commanders.

The regrouping of the Southwestern Front involved a number of difficulties. The complexity of carrying this out was that many formations and units had to be moved large distances along the front during the period of the spring mud and under conditions of a limited number of

crossings over the Oskol and Severskiy Donets Rivers and the absence of equipped roads (routes). All of this required from the staff detailed planning of the arrival of the troops in their areas, the correct operation of the routes, the control of traffic on them, the organizing of camouflage and a dependable air cover. The staffs of the front and the armies, while working intensely, did not achieve the proper clarity in carrying out the measures and in troop control. As an analysis of the documents shows, not one of the operational staffs worked out a unified plan for the regrouping. The troops moved on the basis of individual orders which designated only the concentration areas and the time of movement.

As a consequence of the failure to observe covert control and the poor camouflaging in concentrating the troops in the designated breakthrough sectors, the Nazi Command figured out our plans and took measures to strengthen defenses on the threatened sectors. The troop density in the main defensive zone opposite the assault groupings of the Southwestern Front and along the entire front ahead of the 57th and 9th Armies of the Southern Front was increased sharply by the density, while strong reserves were positioned in the operational depth.

By the end of 11 May, the assault groupings of the Southwestern Front had basically taken up the forming-up place for the offensive. As a result of the regroupings, the balance of forces on the breakthrough sectors of the armies had changed in favor of the Soviet troops (see the table).

Balance of Forces on Army Breakthrough Sectors of Southwestern Front by 12 May 1942

Armies	Ratio		
	Infantry	Guns & Mortars	Tanks
21st Army	2.3:1	1.5:1	0.7:1
28th Army	2.8:1	2.2:1	2.1:1
38th Army	2.6:1	1.4:1	1:1.3
6th Army & operations group	1.6:1	2.0:1	11.8:1

The offensive by the Southwestern Front commenced in the morning of 12 May after a 60-minute artillery softening up. Over the first 3 days the assault groupings breached the German defenses in zones up to 50 km each and had advanced from the Volchansk area some 18-25 km, and from the Barvenkovo Salient, some 25-50 km. On 15 May, the Command of the Southwestern Sector reported to Headquarters that the operation was developing successfully and that the necessary conditions had been created for the involvement of the Bryansk Front in the offensive and for speeding up the operation of the Southwestern Front.(9) The forecasts were premature. By the designated time, a favorable situation had developed only in the zone of the 6th Army, where it had been possible to commit the mobile troops to the breach in the

aim of exploiting the success deep in the defenses. But this was not done by the command of the Southwestern Sector (Front), either on the 15th or 16th of May, while waiting for better conditions. As a result, the first echelon formations from the army exhausted their forces and the rate of advance declined sharply. In the area of Volchansk, the enemy on 14 May committed two panzer divisions to battle and launched a counterstrike in the flank of the 38th Army (commander, Maj Gen Art K.S. Moskalenko). Under enemy pressure its right-flank formations were forced to retreat to the eastern bank of the B. Babka River and thereby exposed the flank of the 28th Army which was advancing on the right. The counterstrike was supported by aviation which seized air supremacy and launched concentrated strikes against the positions of the second echelons of the 28th and 38th Armies, against the crossings and roads connecting the rears of the front with the combat area. Under these conditions, the commander-in-chief of the sector switched the aviation of the 6th Army to support the northern assault grouping.

Due to the measures taken, the situation on the boundary of the 28th and 38th Armies improved. However, the rate of advance of the formations of the 28th Army slowed down. The commander of the front was unable to accelerate this by immediately committing the mobile group because the latter was 20 km from the front line.

Simultaneously with the counterstrike launched against the northern assault grouping of the Southwestern Front, the Nazi Command took measures to stiffen the defenses in the zone of advance of the 6th Army, having moved up to two infantry divisions there.

In the morning of 17 May, the Command of the Southwestern Front decided to commit the XXI Tank Corps to battle.(10) But the time had been missed. The Nazis had succeeded in digging in on the rear lines and to a certain degree stabilized the front. Our mobile formations had to cross a prepared defense.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Southwestern Sector continued to view the offensive operation of the Southwestern Front in isolation from the actions of the Southern Front, considering the position of the troops of the latter on the Barvenkovo Salient to be fully supported and the enemy still incapable of active operations on this sector of the front. He also failed to consider the enemy's capabilities for maneuvering forces. However, by 16 May, the enemy had completed the regrouping and in the morning of 17 May threw into the offensive from the area of Kramatorsk, Slavyansk 11 divisions from Army Group Kleist against the 9th and 57th Armies (commanders, respectively, Maj Gen F.M. Kharitonov and Lt Gen K.P. Podlas) of the Southern Front.

These armies were unable to rebuff such a powerful strike. Their defenses which consisted of strongpoints with poor engineer organization of the terrain were 3-4 km deep. In addition, the 9th Army against which the

enemy launched its main thrust was defending along a wide zone (96 km), having 11-12 guns and mortars per kilometer of front. For this reason on the very first day of the offensive the enemy troops were able to breach the defenses of the 9th Army. As a result of the enemy air strikes against the auxiliary control post and communications center of the army, troop control was disrupted. Its left-flank formations began fighting their way back behind the Severskiy Donets and the right-flank ones to Barvenkovo.

The situation demanded the breaking off of the Kharkov Operation. However, the Command of the Southwestern Sector as before underestimated the danger from the Kramatorsk enemy grouping and did not feel it necessary to halt the offensive. But the conditions continued to deteriorate. As a consequence of the retreat of the 9th Army and the enemy advance to the north along the Severskiy Donets River, a threat arose of encirclement of the entire Soviet troop grouping fighting on the Barvenkovo Salient.

During the evening of 17 May, Col Gen A.M. Vasilevskiy, temporarily acting as the chief of the General Staff, reported to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on the critical situation in the zones of the 9th and 59th Armies and proposed that the offensive of the Southwestern Front be canceled with a portion of the forces from its assault grouping being employed to eliminate the threat from Kramatorsk. Under those conditions there was no other way to rectify the situation, as the front did not have reserves in this area.

I.V. Stalin, having first spoken with MSU S.K. Timoshenko, felt that the measures being undertaken by the Command of the Southwestern Sector were fully sufficient to rebuff the enemy thrust against the Southern Front and gave permission to continue the offensive.

On 18 May, the situation on the Southwestern Front deteriorated further. Col Gen A.M. Vasilevskiy again proposed to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief that the Kharkov offensive be broken off, that the main forces of the Barvenkovo assault grouping be turned, the enemy breakthrough be eliminated and the situation of the 9th Army of the Southern Front be restored. However, the Military Council of the Southwestern Front was able to persuade I.V. Stalin that the danger from the Kramatorsk enemy grouping had been greatly exaggerated and there was no reason to break off the operation. "Referring to these reports from the Military Council of the Southwestern Front on the need to continue the offensive," recalled MSU G.K. Zhukov, "the Supreme rejected the considerations of the General Staff...."(11) This is why the troops of the Southwestern Front continued the offensive against Kharkov which further complicated the situation. "These events were then given a contradictory assessment," wrote Army Gen S.M. Shtemenko. "The Military Council of the Southwestern Sector did not show great alarm...."(12)

Only in the second half of 19 May, when a clear threat of encirclement of the Soviet troops on the Barvenkovo Salient had arisen, did the commander-in-chief of the Southwestern Sector issue an order for them to go over to the defensive, while the main portion of the 6th Army, the XXI and XXXIII Tank Corps as well as troops of the 57th Army were to be employed to defeat the enemy pushing into their rear. Headquarters confirmed this decision. However, the further course of events was to show that it was taken too late. The rapid advance of the enemy panzer and motorized formations to the north prevented the concentrating of the Soviet troops on the sector of the formed breach and forced them to enter battle one by one, without air and artillery support.

On 23 May, Army Group Kleist, advancing from around Kleist, linked up in an area 10 km to the south of Balakleya with units from the 6th German Army which was attacking from the north, having cut off the escape route to the east for the Soviet troops fighting on the Barvenkovo Salient. Leadership of the surrounded field forces and formations was entrusted to the Deputy Commander of the Southwestern Front, Lt Gen F.Ya. Kostenko. From 24 through 29 May, they were heavily engaged by superior enemy forces. Nazi aviation was dominant in the skies. There was an acute shortage of ammunition, fuel and food. The attempt by the Command of the Southwestern Sector to relieve the surrounded forces using a portion of the 38th Army did not produce much of a success. Nevertheless, due to this thrust, around 22,000 soldiers and officers broke out of the encirclement headed by the Military Council Member of the Southwestern Front, Div Commissar K.A. Gurov, and the deputy commander of the 6th Army (from 25 May, the commander of the 57th Army), Maj Gen A.G. Batyunya.

Many loyal sons of the fatherland died a death of the brave in this fighting. Among them were the Deputy Commander of the Southwestern Front, Lt Gen F.Ya. Kostenko, the Commander of the 6th Army, Lt Gen A.M. Gorodnyanskiy, the Military Council Member, Brig Commissar A.I. Vlasov, the Commander of the 57th Army, Lt Gen K.P. Podlas, the Chief of Staff, Maj Gen A.F. Anisov, the Military Council Member, Brig Commissar A.I. Popenko and the Commander of the Operations Group, Maj Gen L.V. Bobkin.

Thus, the offensive operation which had been commenced successfully in the Kharkov area by the Soviet troops ended with a failure. The Southwestern and Southern Fronts suffered heavy losses in personnel and equipment. Such an outcome of the operation was the result primarily of underestimating the "serious danger arising on the Southwestern Strategic Sector where the necessary reserves of Headquarters had not been concentrated," wrote MSU G.K. Zhukov.(13)

In our view, one of the major reasons for the disastrous outcome of the operation was that the high command of the Southwestern Sector did not pay proper attention to

effective support of the main assault grouping of the Southwestern Front from the south using forces of the Southern Front. The configuration of the front line and the presence of operational reserves for the enemy required a more enterprising solution to the given question. It was essential to reinforce the Southern Front and give it active tasks to support the offensive of its neighbor to the right against completely possible enemy counterstrikes. The commander-in-chief of the sector in the directive of 6 April 1942 gave a passive task to the Southern Front, that is, to hold firmly on the occupied lines in the aims of supporting the offensive of the Southwestern Front. The front commander did not receive any other specific instructions. As a result the Southern Front did not even have sufficient forces for creating a strong defense in the zones of the 9th and 57th Armies, where the Nazi counterstrike was the most probable. This also was a violation of the directive orders of Headquarters to the fronts and armies of the Southwestern Sector as these had demanded the development of field fortifications in the defenses to a depth of 10-12 km. (14)

The planning shortcomings made by the staff of the Southwestern Sector were exacerbated by a poor knowledge of the enemy grouping and by the underestimation of its ability to maneuver by rapidly calling up reserves to threatened sectors from the interior and moving them in from other sectors of the front. The mistake in determining the number of enemy troops ahead of the Southwestern Front on 1 April 1942 was two infantry divisions and one panzer division. But by the start of the offensive, the difference between the assumed and actual number of German troops ahead of this front had increased by another two infantry divisions.

The plan for the offensive envisaged the possibility that the enemy would be able to move 5 or 6 divisions from the interior by the 5th or 6th day of the operation. Actually, the enemy reserves began reaching the breakthrough sector on the 2d day of our offensive. The possible appearance of large enemy forces on the southern face of the Barvenkovo Salient and the probable launching of a counterstrike by them in the flank of the southern assault grouping of the front were not envisaged at all. In actuality for launching the counterstrike in the zone of the 9th Army of the Southern Front, by 17 May, the Germans in addition to the forces available here added 5 infantry divisions and 1 panzer division. As a total during our offensive, the Nazi Command moved up and committed to battle 12 infantry divisions and 1 panzer division from the reserve.

The failure to observe covertness in the concentrating of our troops and their excessively long regrouping (up to 30 days) made it possible for the enemy to basically detect the over-all plan of the operation and carry out a countermaneuver to the threatened sectors with units of the 6th Army as well as arriving reserves.

In possessing a 1.5-fold superiority over the enemy for artillery and a more than 2-fold one for infantry and tanks, the commander of the Southwestern Front was unable to establish decisive superiority (with the exception of tanks in the zone of the 6th Army) in the forces on the axes of the main thrusts. Maximum superiority over the enemy was achieved only in the breakthrough sector of the 28th Army: by 2.8-fold for infantry and 2.2-fold for artillery.

Regardless of the fact that the thrust from the Barvenkovo Salient was considered to be the main one, they were unable to achieve a decisive massing of forces on this axis. For example, on the north per kilometer of breakthrough sector the artillery density had been raised to 59.5 guns and mortars while on the southern (main) sector it did not exceed 32 units. Moreover, the artillery from the reserve units of the front and the mobile groups was not involved in the artillery softening up and in his order the front commander did not have any artillery forces.

Cooperation of the troops was not effectively organized. The battle planning tables in the formations and the cooperation tables in the armies were worked out, but the actions of the combat arms in the field were not actually coordinated.

In organizing control, all levels of staffs relied on the dependability of wire communications and underestimated the radio. With the significant distance of the command posts from the forward edge, a real threat was created for disrupting the operations of communications and the loss of control of the troops with the very outset of the offensive.

The mistakes in organizing the offensive were not promptly discovered and eliminated in the course of the operation. The incorrect notion of the enemy forces and its capabilities as well as the successes of our own troops continued among the commander of the Southwestern Front and his staff for an extended time. This kept the commander of the front from promptly committing the second echelons and mobile groups. Thus, in the 28th Army, the second echelon divisions remained in the concentration areas for the entire first day of the offensive. Then one of these was employed to eliminate the blockaded enemy garrison in Ternovaya and the second was put in the army reserve where it remained until the end of the offensive. The second echelon of the 6th Army (two rifle divisions and one tank brigade) during the entire offensive was 10-12 km from the first echelon troops and was not committed to battle at all. Such a large distance excluded the possibility of promptly committing them to battle to complete the breaching of the enemy defenses, to come out in the operational expanse and carry out the task of surrounding the enemy Kharkov grouping. Moreover, in the northern assault grouping the mobile group (III Guards Cavalry Corps) was employed for carrying out particular missions (one

cavalry division took up the defensive, another aided the rifle units in destroying the garrison in Ternovaya while the third covered a gap between the 28th and 38th Armies).

Thus, both on the northern and southern axes, the strikes of the first echelon troops were not supported by second echelons and this weakened the rate of advance and permitted the enemy to move up reserves from the interior, remove a portion of the forces from passive sectors of the front, have them take up rear defensive lines and strengthen the situation.

Prior to the start and in the course of the offensive, reconnaissance did not detect promptly the regrouping and moving up of the enemy operational reserves to the main combat areas. Thus, ahead of the Southern Front, the entire regrouping of enemy troops carried out during the period from 13 through 16 May on a front of 110 km, remained undiscovered. The appearance of new enemy units ahead of the front of the assault groupings in a majority of instances was discovered only in the course of fighting them. Significant inaccuracies were made in determining the number of enemy troops. All of this prevented the drawing of correct conclusions on enemy actions. As a result the favorable conditions for continuing the offensive were not employed.

As a result of the setbacks in the Kharkov area, the situation on the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front changed sharply in favor of the enemy. The Southwestern and Southern Fronts were significantly weakened. In mid-July, the Southwestern Front was forced to retreat twice and move back behind the Oskol River. Having cut off the Barvenkovo Salient, the Nazi troops took up advantageous positions for a further offensive. To a significant degree all of this provided them with success in breaking through to Stalingrad and the Northern Caucasus in the summer of 1942.

The events at Kharkov served as a harsh lesson for the command and the staffs of the field forces, formations and units. The experience gained in the process of this operation was analyzed, generalized and employed in the offensive operations successfully conducted by the Soviet Army in the subsequent years of the war.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 251, inv. 646, file 145, sheets 35-36, 41.
2. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 5, 1975, p 127.
3. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 8, 1980, p 365.

4. "Sbornik voyenno-istoricheskikh materialov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Military History Materials of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 5, 1951, pp 12-14.

5. A.M. Vasilevskiy, "Delo vsey zhizni" [A Cause of One's Entire Life], Moscow, Politizdat, 1973, p 191.

6. TsAMO, folio 220, inv. 226, file 17, sheets 1-6.

7. "Sbornik voyenno-istoricheskikh...", No 5, p 18.

8. Ibid., p 19.

9. TsAMO, folio 220, inv. 226, file 17, sheets 1-6.

10. Ibid., folio 229, inv. 161, file 842, sheets 232-234.

11. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Recollections and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 7th Edition, Vol 2, 1986, p 257.

12. S.M. Shtemenko, "Generalnyy shtab v gody voyny" [The General Staff in the War Years], Moscow, Voenizdat, 2d Revised and Supplemented Edition, Book 1, 1975, p 65.

13. G.K. Zhukov, op. cit., Vol 2, p 258.

14. "Sbornik voyenno-istoricheskikh...", No 5, p 81.

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Rifle Company Offensive Against Prepared Enemy Defenses

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[Article, published under the heading "Mastery and Heroism," by Maj P.D. Alekseyev: "Rifle Company Offensive Against Prepared Enemy Defenses"]

[Text] In the evening of 23 June 1944, the night before an offensive, the 4th Rifle Company of the 109th Guards Rifle Regiment of the 37th Guards Rifle Division received the task of breaching the enemy defenses by an assault from the held line and capturing a strongpoint in the Nikolayevka area and then advance in the direction of the southwestern outskirts of Chernin. According to this task, the company consisting of two rifle platoons and one submachine gunner platoon, numbering a total of 70 men, and reinforced by two medium machine guns, two antitank rifles and two 45-mm antitank cannons was to advance on a front of 100-120 m.(1)

On the axis of the company's advance, the enemy held a prepared, deeply echeloned defenses which had been well developed in engineer terms. The forward edge was

a continuous trench with equipped machine gun emplacements. Directly ahead of the trench were wire obstacles, a concertina wire and kniferests. Ahead of the wire obstacles were antitank and antipersonnel minefields. The fire plan made it possible for the enemy to conduct concentrated and barrage fire as well as maneuver the fire for rapidly massing on any threatened sector. According to the reconnaissance data, the enemy forward edge in the company's zone of advance was defended by an infantry platoon numbering up to 20 men.(2)

Having been given the task and assessed the situation, the company commander, Guards Capt G.I. Kulik, decided to form up the battle formation in a single echelon with the assigning of a reserve consisting of one medium machine gun and two antitank rifles. The attached forces (two 45-mm guns and a machine gun) were distributed to the platoons.(3) Rifleman were assigned to cover them.

The day before the company prepared intensely for the offensive. In observing camouflage measures it was pulled back into the rear, where tactical exercises were organized. In the exercises they worked on the following questions: the assault on the forward edge, fighting in the trenches, movement up behind the exploding shells of our artillery, the employment of grenades in offensive combat, the crossing of enemy obstacles and the repelling of counterattacks. Significant time was given to training the personnel in crossing swampy areas, felled trees and water obstacles. The exercises were held in terrain similar to that where the fighting was to occur. The concluding stage of the combat training was a company tactical exercise with field firing conducted by the battalion commander.(4)

Before the offensive the company commander conducted a reconnaissance with the commanders of the platoons and attached forces and in the course of this he set the battle tasks, organized cooperation, and clarified the procedure for the fire hitting of the enemy, as well as the procedure for the actions of the company subunits and reinforcements in assaulting the forward edge and during combat in depth. Guards Capt G.I. Kulik saw to it that the subordinate commanders had a clear understanding of the lines of the rolling barrage in the field and the cooperation signals.

In preparing for the offensive, great attention was given to party political work. Its main task was to mobilize the company personnel to carry out the set task. For this purpose, meetings and talks were held and during which they explained the nature and particular features of the forthcoming combat, they inculcated confidence in the defeat of the enemy and read out the appeals of the military councils of the front and the army. The offensive combat zeal which took over the men of the company had been prepared for by all the organizational and indoctrinational work in the troops.

The offensive was preceded by the artillery softening up of the division and this commenced at 0455 hours on 24 June and lasted 125 minutes.

The first intense shelling lasted 15 minutes. It was so powerful that the enemy soldiers fled from the first trench deep into the defenses. The company commander made use of this. Some 10 minutes after the end of the first intense shelling, the company in small groups crossed the swampy area and occupied the enemy's first trench. Upon signal from the battalion commander, the artillery fire was shifted to the second trench.(5)

At 0700 hours, with artillery support, the company continued the offensive and without encountering particular enemy resistance, quickly took the second trench. By 0740 hours it had reached the southwestern outskirts of Nikolayevka, thereby having advanced 1.8 km in depth.(6)

The infantry offensive with artillery support was so rapid that the rolling barrage had to be shifted to every other line and sometimes over two. The commander of the rifle battalion controlled the shifting of artillery fire. Control was carried out by radio, as light signals were poorly observed and were often confused with the enemy's signals.(7) The company's rate of advance was 2.7 km an hour. This became possible due to the dependable and continuous fire neutralization of the enemy with the double rolling barrage.

After the halting of the support of artillery fire for the advancing troops, the enemy resistance stiffened significantly. The further advance of the company was held up by the fire of an individual group of submachine gunners and two medium machine guns from the western outskirts of Nikolayevka. Then the company commander called in artillery fire through the forward artillery observer who had been assigned to the company with communications equipment. Having neutralized the enemy by concentrated artillery and small-arms fire, the company continued its offensive and by 0900 hours, in cooperation with the adjacent troops, had captured Nikolayevka.

In the course of the offensive, Guards Capt G.I. Kulik had continuously observed the battlefield. On the edge of the forest some 1.5 km to the northwest of Nikolayevka, he spotted the appearance of the enemy with up to an infantry company with four tanks in strength. Having informed the battalion commander of this by a messenger, he called in artillery fire. Having assigned lines to the platoons to repel the counterattack, he ordered that they hit the dirt and prepare for battle.

The company commander moved up the reserve as well as a 45-mm gun to the right flank. By this time the supporting artillery from indirect firing positions had opened up fire and this was supplemented by the direct laying of the 45-mm guns, the antitank rifles and small arms. The company was also supported by the fire of

adjacent units. As a result of the well-organized cooperation of the infantry with the artillery and the employing of the fire of all types of weapons as well as skillful control, the enemy counterattack was repelled. Having lost up to 40 men killed and wounded, the enemy retreated in the direction of Chernin.(8) The company, without encountering serious enemy resistance, under the cover of artillery fire successfully continued the offensive on the axis indicated for it and by 1830 hours on 24 June had reached the northwestern outskirts of Chernin, having advanced 7 km.

In the course of the offensive, the company commander and the reserve were 100-150 m from the extended line of advancing troops. The company was controlled by voice, by signals as well as by messengers.(9)

The designated experience of the advance of a rifle company is characterized by careful preparation and organization of combat, by involving the maximum number of weapons for direct participation in the fighting, by dependable fire damage to the enemy, by bold and enterprising actions on the part of the company commander in utilizing the results of the fire, by the maintaining of clear cooperation, by the conduct of continuous reconnaissance and by firm and flexible control.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 1128, inv. 1, file 70, sheet 116.
2. Ibid., folio 422, inv. 10496, file 389, sheet 136.
3. Ibid., folio 1128, inv. 1, file 70, sheet 116.
4. "Osvobozhdeniya Belorussii. 1944" [The Liberation of Belorussia. 1944], Moscow, Nauka, 1974, p 575.
5. TsAMO, folio 856, inv. 1, file 1, sheet 80.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., sheet 80 verso.
9. Ibid., folio 1128, inv. 1, file 70, sheet 116.

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Notes on Biography of G.K. Zhukov

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[Article, published under the heading "From Unpublished Manuscripts," by K.M. Simonov: "Notes on the Biography of G.K. Zhukov"; continuation of series. For the beginning see: *Voyenno-istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, Nos 6, 7, 9, 1987]

[Text] The next note which I would like to give involves the difficult October events for us when having breached the front and surrounded a large portion of the Western and Reserve Fronts near Vyazma, the Germans were pushing toward Stalingrad.

[The text below are comments by Zhukov] During the second half of the day of 6 October, Stalin phoned me in Leningrad. He was interested in how things were going on the front, what the situation was and after this said that I should come back immediately to Moscow to carry out a special assignment.

I replied that I would leave the next day. On 7 October, having turned over the files on the command of the Leningrad Front to the Chief of Staff, Gen Khozin, I flew off to Moscow. I arrived in Moscow in the evening and went immediately to Stalin's apartment. Stalin was ill with the flu but was working.

Having greeted me with a nod of his head, he proposed looking at the map and said:

"I cannot get a clear report as to what is happening now on the Western Sector. Where is the enemy and where are our troops? Travel immediately to the staff of the Western Front and phone me at any time of the day. I will wait."

[Simonov's note] Having skipped in this instance Zhukov's description of how he traveled to the staffs and troops of the Western and Reserve Fronts and studied the situation which had arisen there, I will go on directly to the notes on those talks with Stalin which Zhukov had with his subsequent appointment as commander of the Western Front.

[Zhukov's comments] Stalin was nervous and terribly angry. In talking with me, he in the strongest terms complained fiercely of the commanders of the Western and Bryansk Fronts, Konev and Yeremenko, and did not mention a single word about Budenny, the commander of the Reserve Front. Obviously, he considered this man as no longer accountable. He told me that I had been appointed the commander of the Western Front, that Konev had been removed from this position and after the government commission which had been sent to his front staff had drawn its conclusions, he would be turned over to the military tribunal.

To this I told Stalin that such actions would not rectify anything, that it would bring back no one, and would merely make a bad impression in the army. I reminded him that at the outset of the war the commander of the Western Front, Pavlov, had been executed, but what had this done? Not a thing. Even beforehand it had been well known just what sort of person Pavlov was and that the top for him was a divisional commander. Everyone knew this. Nevertheless, he had been in command of the front and had not been able to handle what he could not handle. But Konev was not Pavlov, he was an intelligent man. He was still good for something.

Then Stalin asked:

"What do you propose doing?"

I said that I would propose leaving Konev my deputy.

Stalin asked with surprise:

"Why are you defending Konev? Is he your friend?"

I replied no, Konev and I had never been friends and I had known him only as a fellow officer in the Belorussian District.

Stalin gave his approval.

I feel that this decision taken by Stalin before the conclusions of the commission played an important role in Konev's fate, because the commission which had traveled to the front and was headed by Molotov would certainly propose a different solution. Knowing Molotov well, I did not doubt this.

A day or two later after I had assumed command of the front, I sent Konev as my deputy to the right flank, to Kalinin. In command of this far distant flank, he acted there independently and successfully and soon thereafter assumed command of the Kalinin Front which was established there.

A day or so after I had been appointed commander of the front, Molotov phoned me. In the conversation he brought up one of the axes on which the Germans were continuing to advance and our units were continuing to retreat. Molotov spoke to me with his voice raised. Obviously, he had direct information on the advance of the German tanks on this sector and by that time I had not been fully informed of the situation. In a word, he said something to the effect that either I stop this retreat threatening Moscow or I would be executed! To this I replied:

"Don't try to frighten me, as I am not afraid of your threats. I haven't been 2 days yet since I have assumed command of the front and I am not fully informed of the situation and I do not know completely what is being done where. I am studying this in taking over the troops."

In reply he again raised his voice and began speaking in the same vein. How could it be that I have not been able to grasp things in 2 days!

I replied that if he is able to study the situation faster than I, then let him come and assume command of the front. He hung up on me and I began to get to work.

Several days before the parade on Red Square, Stalin phoned me and said that the GKO [State Defense Committee] intended (it was his habit to say: "The GKO has decided" or "The GKO intends") to hold the traditional parade in Moscow on 7 November. What was my opinion? Could the Germans impede this by air or ground operations. Wouldn't they attempt to break through to Moscow?

I replied that on the ground we could guarantee that nothing above the ordinary would happen on that day. From the air the parade must be additionally secured. Possibly, in addition to the existing forces we should shift to Moscow certain fighter units. I concluded that the holding of the parade, in my opinion, was possible and that this would have a meliorating impression on the army.

Stalin phoned me again in the morning of the day before the parade. He said that it had been decided to hold the parade and, having added that in the evening he would speak at a session of the Moscow Soviet, wondered whether the situation permitted my coming there from the front.

I went and was present at this session held in the subway at Mayakovskiy Station.

Stalin was a person who having once fastened onto something had difficulty giving up this idea or intention, even if the objective circumstances directly showed that it was essential to forego the initial plan.

In May 1942, Stalin was relatively gentle with the persons guilty of the Kerch catastrophe, obviously because he recognized his own personal responsibility for it. The offensive there had been undertaken at his insistence and it had also been at his insistence that such a number of troops had been concentrated there. Headquarters and the General Staff had proposed a different solution. They proposed pulling back the troops from the Kerch Peninsula to the Taman and building our defenses there. But he did not consider these proposals, feeling that in fighting there, we would free Manstein's 11th German Army which was invading the Crimea. As a result, it turned out that Manstein's Army was still freed and we suffered a major defeat at Kerch.

Having taken a wrong decision, Stalin in addition sent to the Kerch Peninsula representatives of Headquarters who ensured disaster: Mekhlis and Kulik. The latter was incapable of directing anything reasonably. These representatives acted at Kerch together with a weak, spineless

commander of the front Kozlov. And when this enterprise which had been begun at Stalin's insistence and under the leadership of persons he personally sent there ended in a disaster, they suffered less of a punishment than other persons would have for the same thing under different circumstances.

Even at that period, when I had become the deputy supreme commander-in-chief and between trips to the front sometimes spent a month or two working in Moscow, I once told Stalin that his closest associates, myself included, were completely exhausted.

He with some surprise asked: "Why?"

I told him that he worked at night and we also worked during this time. But we did not know that he went off to sleep so we stayed and continued working. In the morning, when he was asleep, it was the worst time for us and we were forced to work. He got up at 1400 hours and began working while by this time we had been working all morning and had to be ready for his call at any moment. That was how things had been going day after day, month after month. And the personnel had been worn out by this.

While I was saying all of this to him, he interrupted several times, asked questions and even expressed surprise that no one had gone to bed when he had. Then he said:

"Alright, I promise you that I will not phone you anymore at night."

And in actuality, from that very day until the end of the war he never phoned me later than midnight. Once he phoned me exactly at midnight, but began his talk with me with the question: "You have still not gone to bed, Comrade Zhukov?" I said no, that I was just planning to. He asked me a specific question, not among the most essential and, having immediately terminated the conversation, said: "Well, goodbye and get some rest."

[Simonov comment] I would like to give Zhukov's reply to one of my questions linked to the Stalingrad Operation. This question was evoked by the fact that in certain articles and memoirs one could spot a difference in views on how the 2d Guards Army of Malinovskiy which was in the reserve of Headquarters had been committed to battle in December 1942 in Kotelnikovo. It was a crucial moment as the relieving Got Panzer Group was pushing closer and closer to Stalingrad and the 2d Guards Army had been rushed into its path although initially this army was to be employed on another Southwestern Front. By a decisive thrust against Rostov, it was to cut off all the German troops to the east. I had encountered hints that this would have been better, even at the price of letting the Got get even closer to Stalingrad, while keeping for Malinovskiy's Army the former decisive task of a cutting off thrust against Rostov.

I had been enticed with this viewpoint and it seemed to me bolder and, asking my question of Zhukov, I, putting it frankly, thought that he would support it. But my expectations were not realized.

[Zhukov's comments] "During the period when the question arose of redirecting Malinovskiy's Army," said Zhukov, "I was no longer in the south but at the Western Front and concerned with organizing an offensive against the Germans so that they could not shift their forces to the south. In organizing this offensive which cannot be recognized as successful, I was summoned to the telephone by Stalin. He told me that there was a proposal to shift Malinovskiy's army, to bring it to the aid of the Stalingrad Front, instead, as had been previously proposed, building up the push against Rostov from the north. He asked what my opinion was."

I in turn asked what Vasilevskiy who was there in the south thought of this.

Stalin said that Vasilevskiy considered it essential to shift this army to help Stalingrad. In respecting Vasilevskiy's opinion and considering this essential, I replied to Stalin that if this were the case, then obviously it was essential.

Our talk ended with this. And, looking back and considering the balance of forces then, I feel that in that situation that was the only thing we could do. I subscribe to this decision and consider it correct.

Incidentally, our initial plan did actually presuppose a thrust against Rostov from the north in order to prohibit to the Germans everything to the east of this thrust. This plan had been drawn up at Headquarters and signed by Vasilevskiy and me as the deputy supreme commander-in-chief.

I recalled that I had asked Stalin then to sign the map on which the plan had been drawn up.

"Why?" he said. "I know about this and I agree."

Then I said to him: "Sign for history."

"Ah, for history," he said and signed the map.

I wanted him to sign this map. The responsibility was enormous and the decision being taken was major and it was essential that he himself sign the map. [End of Zhukov's comments]

[Simonov note] The next entries go back to 1944 and 1945 to the last period of the war.

[Zhukov's comments] In the autumn of 1944, after the conclusion of the summer Belorussian Operation, in a talk at Headquarters on the results of this operation, Stalin said to me:

"You see, you proposed at first that the fronts advance in a different sequence and at that time I did not agree with you and was right. Things would have gone better with the other sequence which we had set."

I remember it happening well how things had gone in planning this operation in which I coordinated the actions of the two fronts. I argued back that although everything had turned out good enough, I had not proposed a different sequence of actions for the fronts.

"What do you mean?" said Stalin.

"I did not propose something different. Let us look at the directives."

He opened the drawer of the desk, pulled out the directives and first read them himself, then pushing them toward me and said:

"Read."

I began to read and soon reached the place where it was obvious that he was not right and I had in fact not proposed a different sequence for committing the fronts in carrying out the operation.

He interrupted me, snatched the directive from me and passed it to Malenkov.

"Read."

He, turning around, read to the very same point and then faltered, obviously not knowing what to do next, because there then followed the text which contradicted Stalin's words. He stammered but still continued reading. What else could he do!

Stalin took the papers from him and gave them to Beriya:

"Read."

Beriya began to read but try as he would he could get nothing else from it.

Stalin took the directives and putting them back in the drawer said nothing but you could feel that he was very dissatisfied. For some reason particularly in this instance, he wanted to be responsible for the entire success of the operation linked to the correctness of its planning.

On that day the discussion was generally heavy going. Soon after this he began saying to me that in the pending Vistula-Oder and Berlin Operations, there would be no need at all for coordinating the actions of the fronts in the field. This coordination could be carried out by Headquarters directly from Moscow. Having said this, he proposed that I assume command of the First Belorussian Front which was to move directly against Berlin.

I asked him where he planned in this instance to appoint Rokossovskiy who was already the commander of this front.

He replied to the question with another question:

"What would you do in this instance? You will command the First Belorussian Front and where would you appoint Rokossovskiy?"

I replied that if this were the case he should be sent to command the Second Belorussian Front which would cooperate with the First in our thrust against Berlin.

And this was how the question was settled, and not as is sometimes depicted subsequently. The very origin of this question goes back to an earlier time, that is, to the summing up of the results of the Belorussian Operation and to the conflict which arose here. I feel that the result of this conflict was Stalin's reticence for me to coordinate the actions of the fronts and his intention to send me to command a decisive but single front.

In Konev's memoirs about his talk with Stalin during the first period of the Belorussian Operation there is a place which evokes doubt in me.

Konev had written that Stalin asked him about the possibility of committing two tank armies of the First Belorussian Front to the breakthrough on his front and through his army. I find it hard to believe that Stalin could have made such a proposal primarily because, as can be seen from Konev's own words, at the very moment when Stalin was asking about such a possibility, both the tank armies of the First Belorussian Front, Katukov's army and Bogdanov's army had already been committed by me as my first echelons. To withdraw them from the First Belorussian Front and shift them for further fighting to the First Ukrainian Front at that very moment would have meant to partially withdraw them from battle. Stalin realized what this would mean and it is hard for me to imagine that he could have proposed this. It is all the more difficult because at that time he had responded calmly to the slowdown in the rate of our advance on the First Belorussian Front. When I reported to him that, as I had feared, we were becoming stuck, that the Germans had concentrated forces, were putting up fierce resistance and our advance had slowed down and that we had as yet been unable to break through in depth, Stalin responded very calmly.

"Well," he said, "let us bring up the reserves, let us hold on. The more we knock out here the fewer in Berlin."

That was his response on that difficult day for us.

And it was to remain so subsequently. I figured initially that by 1 May we would already be able to report on the end of the fighting in Berlin and that this could be announced at the May Day Parade. When 30 April came I realized that we would not be able to do this, I phoned

Stalin and told him that we would need another couple days to deal with Berlin. I expected dissatisfaction from him and possibly rebuke. But contrary to my expectations he reacted very calmly.

"Well then, we won't announce it yet. On this May Day they will be in a good mood. We will announce it later. There is no need to rush there, on the front. This is no time to rush. Save men. We do not need extra losses. One, two or several days are not crucial here."

That was his response to my reports, both at the beginning of the fighting for Berlin and at the end. [End of Zhukov's comments]

3.

[Semonov's comment] And now several entries giving some notion of Zhukov's over-all view about Stalin's activities as commander-in-chief and his attitude toward the others who worked under his leadership during the war years.

In these notes personal emotions are juxtaposed to an indisputable desire for the justness in judgments which, it seems to me, was generally inherent to Zhukov, regardless of all the sharpness and at times implacability of his character.

[Zhukov's comments] Stalin had a grasp of strategic questions from the very outset of the war. Strategy was close to his habitual sphere, politics, and the more direct bearing the questions of strategy had on political questions the more confident he felt in them.

At the outset of the war, he had a poor understanding of the questions of operational art. I personally became aware that he had mastered operational questions in the last period of the Stalingrad Battle and by the time of the Kursk Salient it could be said without exaggeration that he felt completely confident on these questions.

As for the questions of tactics, strictly speaking he did not understand them until the very end. Actually as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief there was no necessity for him to understand this. It was much more important that his mind and talent permitted him in the course of the war to master operational art to such a degree that, in summoning the commanders of the fronts to him and talking with them on subjects related to the conduct of the operations, he proved to be an individual who understood this as well or even better than his subordinates. Here in a number of instances he found and suggested interesting operational decisions.

To this it is essential to add that he had his own method of mastering the specific material of a forthcoming operation, a method which I, generally speaking, consider correct. Before the start of preparations for one or another operation, before calling in the commanders of the fronts, he met ahead of time with certain officers of

the General Staff, majors and lieutenant colonels who were in charge of the corresponding operational sectors. He called them in one after another to give a report, he worked with them for 1.5-2 hours, he clarified the situation with each and studied it and during his meeting with the front commanders and during the setting of the new tasks for them, was so thoroughly prepared that at times he amazed them with his grasp of the situation.

I remember one such talk when he suddenly asked me about a certain village, who occupied it, the Germans or our troops. During that time I was directing the actions of two fronts and did not know who occupied it. I told him this. He then led me up to a map and having said that this village was occupied by the Germans, advised me to pay attention to it.

"As a population point it is nothing," he said, "and possibly the village will not exist at all after the fighting. But if you take the configuration of the entire sector of the front, this point is essential and in the event of active operations by the Germans can represent a serious danger to us."

After I myself had looked at the configuration of this sector of the front on the map, I had to agree with the correctness of his judgment. This is only one such example.

Possibly in employing this method he at times liked to emphasize his omniscience to us. But the main thing was that his omniscience was not feigned but actual and his preliminary work with a few officers from the General Staff for clarifying the situation prior to taking decisions was, to the highest degree, rational work.

At the outset of the war (in saying this I mean up to the time of the Stalingrad Battle) it would happen that in listening to reports, he sometimes made comments showing an elementary ignorance of the situation and insufficient knowledge of military affairs.

For example, this was the case in the summer of 1942, when I had to report to him on the Western Front concerning an operation involving the taking of Pogoreloye Gorodishche. I reported to him that two thrusts would be made: the main one on the right and an auxiliary one on the left. To the right on the map was a large, long red arrow and on the left a small one. Spotting the second arrow, he asked:

"What is this?"

I had to explain that the small arrow designated the auxiliary thrust.

"Why an auxiliary thrust there? Why the devil should we split our forces? We must concentrate them at one point and not split them."

I had to report that I had thought up this auxiliary thrust. Having struck in two places, we would create uncertainty in the enemy as to which would be the main thrust and we would tie down a portion of its reserves on the axis of our auxiliary thrust so that it would not be able to maneuver when on the second day of the operation it would discover where we were actually launching the main thrust.

Regardless that my explanation seemed persuasive, he remained dissatisfied with it. I continued my report. Ultimately, without agreeing to my arguments, he said:

"You have not persuaded us. You are the commander of the front and responsible for this."

It was necessary to reply that I realized that I was the commander of the front and ready to bear full responsibility for what I was proposing.

With this the discussion ended and I must say this was rather characteristic for the first period of the war.

Subsequently, in the second period, when the plans of an operation were being discussed, Stalin on the contrary repeatedly raised questions such as: could we not make an auxiliary thrust, make a feint, catch the enemy reserves off guard. Subsequently, the planning of a whole series of our successive thrusts by different fronts, and in particular the so-called "ten Stalin punches" of 1944 was related to this much more profound understanding of these questions.

From the time of Stalingrad, Stalin adhered to his own approach to the problems of encircling and destroying the German troops. The course of the Stalingrad operation was burned into his memory and he returned repeatedly to its experience. When later on we were planning the operation to encircle the Germans in the Krivoy Rog area, I encountered this in a discussion with Stalin. Stalin argued against our plans to conduct an operational encirclement of the Germans in order to subsequently complete this with a tactical encirclement and destroy the Germans in the created pocket. He argued and posed a different task and demanded that we create a threat of encirclement which would force the Germans to hurriedly retreat from the Krivoy Rog Basin. In recalling Stalingrad, he said that like now we had promised to surround and destroy the Germans in 10 days but it took 2 1/2 months to deal with them.

A similar discussion occurred with Stalin in a later period, when in 1944, reaching the axis of Chernovtsy—Proskurov we, in following the general situation, intended to encircle the Germans. In any event we were thinking about this.

Stalin phoned and said:

"I feel that you are toying with an encirclement there."

We had to confirm that actually we did have such a thought and the situation itself suggested this.

"You must not," said Stalin. "How much time will this take?"

We replied that the encirclement and subsequent destruction of the surrounded enemy would obviously require about a month.

"A month," he said, "you say a month? In Stalingrad they said the same thing. But in fact it will take 2 or 3 months. We must not surround the enemy on our territory. We must kick it out. We must drive it out, liberate our land more quickly as in the spring we must sow and we will need bread. It is essential to reduce the possibility of destruction, let the enemy pull out. Create a situation for it to leave faster. The enemy must be expelled quicker from our territory. That is our task. You can carry out an encirclement later, on enemy territory."

If one speaks about Stalin's directives to employ the various combat arms, in particular the artillery, or the so-called "Stalin's Instructions on Military Questions," these cannot rightly be termed as such. Ordinarily these were ideas linked to the over-all leadership of the troops or to actions of the various combat arms. They were based upon conclusions drawn from the previous experience of the war and which was to be employed for troop leadership subsequently. All of this, as a rule, had been worked out by the commanders of the combat arms and their staffs, by the General Staff, by Antonov, Vasilevskiy and myself. They were then submitted for Stalin's review and after his approval, as his instructions, were sent out to the troops.

Stalin's professional military knowledge was insufficient not only at the beginning of the war but also at the very end. However, in a majority of instances, he could not be faulted either in terms of intelligence, common sense or an understanding of the situation. In analyzing the history of the war, in each specific instance for the sake of justice one must understand what was actually the case. To Stalin's detriment there were orders and imperatives which brooked no argument and which told poorly and harmfully on the situation. But a majority of his instructions and orders was correct and just.

In saying this one must not forget the difficult moments which occurred in dealing with Stalin. Once I went to see him for a report together with Vasilevskiy. Vasilevskiy reported the true situation which conformed neither to our expectations or our intentions. The Germans were doing precisely the opposite of what we proposed and what we wanted. Stalin was infuriated by this unpleasant report. He went up to Vasilevskiy and asked him point-blank:

"For whom are you working, Comrade Vasilevskiy?"

He did not understand:

"I beg your pardon, Comrade Stalin?"

"For whom are you working, for the English or for the Germans?"

Vasilevskiy repeated:

"I do not understand you, Comrade Stalin."

"What don't you understand? You are giving a report as if you worked not for us but for the English...."

Vasilevskiy turned white. And later, after this interrupted difficult conversation, we were going back in a car, get himself together. The next morning he and I were back to report to Stalin and Stalin behaved as if yesterday's conversation had never occurred.

Generally speaking, in the second period of the war Stalin was not inclined to rush in settling questions. He generally heard out reports, including unpleasant ones, without showing any nervousness, without interrupting and smoking, he walked back and forth, sat down and listened.

In the course of the war a certain abruptness developed in him as a negative trait. One could feel more frequently and more clearly that what he wanted was all the victories and successes to be linked with him and that he envied the high regard shown to the various actions of various commanders. I, for example, felt this sharply at the Victory Parade, when I was greeted with shouts of "Hoorah!" He did not like this. I could see his grimace.

You ask what Stalin was like at the beginning of the war and at its end. What changed in him? Was the difference noticeable?

First of all, it must be said that Stalin remained Stalin. His fundamental views, his habits, his attitude toward the situation and to others did not undergo decisive changes. His attitude toward others remained as before but the war reevaluated others. In the course of the war their accomplishments, their capabilities and their necessity for the job became apparent, and Stalin's attitude toward others was more and more tied to this. For example, at the outset of the war he had a bad opinion of Konev and removed him from the command of fronts. But later on, when Konev assumed command of the Steppe Front and things were going well for him and successes and successful operations came one after another, Stalin, seeing how Konev could fight, changed his attitude toward him. In the course of the war Stalin himself gained experience and knowledge. He began to understand much of what he did not understand initially. Becoming involved in military activity, he became more profound and more just in his views. In addition, he began generally to consider objective reality much more. The viewpoint that "what I have decided can and

should be" gave way to more sober positions based upon an objective assessment of reality. "You can do only what you can do and what must not be done should not be done."

He began to listen more and more closely to advice, and a link arose between his desire to listen and consider advice and his more and more profound understanding of the military situation. The former gave rise to the latter and the latter, in turn, strengthened the former. A more profound understanding of the situation impelled him to listen to advice and having listened, he delved evermore deeply into the questions of the war.

As I have already mentioned, in those talks with Stalin which were directly related to the conduct of military operations, over the war years I repeatedly had to express my disagreement and argue. Clearly, all of this created definite opinion in him about me.

When I have been removed from the position of deputy minister and was in command of a district in Sverdlovsk, Abakumov under Beriya's leadership, prepared a whole file on a military conspiracy. A number of officers was arrested and the question arose of my arrest. Beriya and Abakumov resorted to such stupidity and baseness as to try to depict me as the person who, at the head of these arrested officers, was preparing a military conspiracy against Stalin. But, as I was later told by persons present at this discussion, Stalin, having heard Beriya's proposal for my arrest, said:

"No, I will not let Zhukov be arrested. I don't believe all of this. I know him well. Over the 4 years of the war I knew him better than myself."

These were his words and after this Beriya's attempt to finish me off collapsed.

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Crossing a Water Barrier

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[Article, published under the heading "Local Wars," by Maj Gen (Ret) V.I. Makarevskiy, candidate of military sciences and docent and Col B.I. Pavlov, candidate of historical sciences: "The Crossing of a Water Barrier"; the article was written from the experience of the 1973 Arab- Israeli War]

[Text] A characteristic feature in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War was the crossing of the Suez Canal by both belligerents successively. The military operations started with the successful crossing of the canal by Egyptian troops along a broad front from west to east. This was preceded by extensive preparations for the offensive operation.

Then the Israeli troops, having seized the initiative, without a pause crossed the canal in the reverse direction and, committing large mobile forces to the captured bridgehead, changed the course of the war in their favor. Thus, the crossing of the Suez Canal in both instances was of determining significance for the further course of combat.

The Suez Canal is a hydroengineering structure without locks, flow-through and filled with sea water. In its southern part it is subjected to tidal phenomena and this causes the rapid change of current. The length of the canal is 161 km, the width in its main part is 160-180 m, the depth in the channel is 12-13 m and the width of the channel is 45-60 m. For almost 40 km, the canal passes through a system of lakes with brackish salty water. Every 8-9 km in the canal channel there are widenings up to 750 m long for the passage of oncoming ships. The shores of the canal are largely steep (1.5-2 m high) and are faced with stone or concrete. Along virtually the entire length of the canal on both sides are high earthen embankments formed in construction and later turned into artificial barriers. In individual areas on the banks of the lakes, there are sandy beach areas.

Thus, although the canal is considered among the medium water obstacles in terms of width, its particular features complicate a crossing. The great depths exclude the movement of tanks across the bottom and the building of low-level bridges on fixed supports. The high percentage of salt in the water, in somewhat increasing buoyancy and stability of crossing equipment, requires special measures to maintain and protect the equipment. The tidal phenomena in the southern part of the canal (twice a day the water level changes some 1.5-2 m with a current speed of 1 m a second) significantly complicate the use of floating bridges and ferry crossings. Finally, the various fortification structures and obstacles erected on the earthen embankments and terrain adjacent to the canals complicate the crossing.

The Egyptian troops commenced preparations for a crossing of the Suez Canal at the end of 1972, when, in the assessment of Western reviewers, the government of President Sadat took a decision to liberate the territory captured by Israel in 1967 on the Sinai Peninsula.(1)

According to the Egyptian Command's plan, the elaboration of which had been completed by the start of the autumn of 1943, the Suez Canal was to be crossed to the north and to the south of the Great Bitter Lake with artillery and air support and under the cover of air defense weapons. Then the enemy defenses were to be breached and on the 7th-8th day of the offensive they were to capture the line of Gebel-Alaq, Gebel-Umm-Hisheiba, Gebel-Umm-Mihasa, Gebel-Umm-Magarim and the mountain passes of Mitla and Giddi. The Egyptian leadership assumed that the reaching of this line by their troops would force Israel into talks and would clear the captured lands.

The plan of the operation (code named Badr) was for the canal to be crossed by the infantry divisions. Having broken through the first zone of the enemy's defenses, it was proposed that five divisional bridgeheads be captured up to 15 km deep each and that these then be connected into two army ones. After this the tank and mechanized divisions and the air defense subunits and units would move to the eastern bank of the canal over the erected crossings, the offensive would be continued and the designated line of the mountain passes reached.(2)

The execution of this task was entrusted to two field armies, the 2d and 3d, which consisted of five infantry divisions, two mechanized divisions and two tank divisions and several separate infantry, tank and artillery brigades. The troops of the 2d Army were to advance to the north of the Great Bitter Lake while the troops of the 3d Army were to be to the south of it. The sectors for the crossing of the Suez Canal were chosen in the areas of Qantara, Ismailiya and Suez considering the possibility of a further offensive along the main communications arteries: Qantara—El Aris, Gaza; Ismailiya—Bir Gafata—Nissana; Suez—Mitla—Qassima. This was of particular significance since travel off the roads was very difficult for the combat equipment and transport.(3)

The width of the zone of advance for the first echelon divisions was set at 15-18 km. In each divisional zone they planned to have a crossing by the forces of two infantry brigades and one battalion. The over-all width of a divisional crossing sector was 12 km.

The Egyptian Command gave great attention to achieving surprise for the initial thrust. A special plan of measures was worked out for operational camouflage and for disinformation of the enemy. Planning was carried out in a situation of strict secrecy. The most limited group of individuals was allowed to see the operational documents. Conversations about the forthcoming offensive were categorically banned over all types of communications with the exception of those that ensured complete secrecy. Simultaneously in the aim of disinformation, information was disseminated on the preparation of the Egyptian troops for regular maneuvers in the Canal Zone (numerous ones had been conducted prior to this).

The beginning of the offensive was set for 6 October, the 10th day of the Moslem fast of Ramadan and on the eve of the Jewish religious holiday of Atonement (Yom Kippur), when the Israeli troops would least expect active combat from Egypt. This also provided an opportunity to use full-moon nights for the regrouping of troops and crossing equipment.(4)

Also carefully thought out was the time for the start of the offensive, noon. In addition to surprise, this provided the Egyptian troops with up to 4 hours of daylight to break through the first zone of the enemy defenses and set up the crossings. In this instance the arrival and

active operations of enemy reserves and tanks could not be expected any earlier than the morning of the next day, when the tanks and artillery would have crossed to the eastern bank and antitank defenses would have been organized.

The Egyptian measures for operational camouflage were effective. Israeli intelligence (with the aid of the U.S. intelligence services) detected the preparations of the Egyptian Offensive Operation only at the beginning of October, when intense troop movements had started. But under these conditions the Israeli Command confident of the unassailability of its defenses along the Suez Canal felt that the Arab states would not risk starting an offensive. Over the years of the occupation of the Sinai, a 160-km defensive line (the Barlev Line) had been built along the canal and consisting of two defensive zones some 30-50 km in depth. The first zone consisted of two positions. The forward edge of the first position 2-3 km deep ran directly along the bank of the canal and was based on a steep earthen embankment up to 20 m tall. The basis of the position was company and platoon strongpoints (35-40 points). These covered the threatened sectors, they were echeloned and had a system of trenches, firing positions, reinforced concrete shelters, minefields, various obstacles and so forth. As an important antilanding device they proposed using a burning mixture kept in special underground storage tanks built on the threatened sectors in the earthen embankment and designed for 200 tons each. The storage tanks were connected by pipelines which ran to the canal and thus at the required moment the canal could be turned into a "fiery river."

The second position of the first defensive zone was 12-15 km from the canal. Its strongpoints covered the main roads to the mountain passes. Here also were the main reserves of the entire first zone. Some 30-50 km away running along the key points of the mountain passes was the second defensive zone which also had a system of permanent firing positions, trenches, strongpoints and so forth.(6)

As a total in the event of fighting on the Sinai Peninsula, the Israeli Command proposed providing up to 150,000 soldiers and officers, around 1,000 tanks and 300 guns.

The Command of the Egyptian Armed Forces prepared carefully for the operation. Long before the start of combat, the requirements for military training were sharply increased in the troops. Increased-intensity exercises, firing, marches and so forth began to be conducted more frequently. Special attention was paid to antitank defenses. There was an increase in the number of ATGM [antitank guided missile] batteries. Specially trained groups with hand-held antitank grenade launchers were introduced into the infantry units and subunits.

For working on the crossing of the water barrier and for getting across the enemy's first defensive zone, in the Nile Delta in terrain similar in relief to the eastern bank of the canal, a series of exercises was conducted and on the bank they built strongpoints similar to the type of the Israelis. In these areas they trained the personnel from the infantry divisions of the 2d and 3d Armies. Special attention was given to training the assault groups which were to be the first to land on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal and ensure the further success of the operation.

A day before the start of the operation, an offensive grouping was organized and the forming-up place for the offensive was readied. In accord with the schedule worked out in detail, the firing positions were initially taken up by the artillery and air defense weapons. At the same time, the combat engineers prepared the crossing facilities, the assault and landing boats with motors, footbridges, ferries, pontoon equipment and so forth. Some 3 days before the operation, the tanks were moved on trailers to the forming-up places. During the night of 6 October, the infantry units and formations took up the forming-up places. The regrouping of the troops was carried out at night in observing camouflage measures and with radio silence. As a total Egypt had provided for the offensive on the Sinai Peninsula up to 400,000 soldiers and officers, 2,000 tanks and SAU and 400 combat aircraft, having provided a 2.5-fold general superiority in men and weapons and even greater superiority on the crossing sectors.

At 1400 hours on 6 October 1973 by Cairo time, around 4,000 guns, rocket launchers and mortars of the Egyptian troops (70-75 units per kilometer of sector of advance) and 400 fighter bombers unleashed their fire on the first zone of the Israeli defenses.(8) The artillery softening up which lasted a total of 53 minutes began with a 15-minute intense shelling against the strongpoints of the forward edge. This was followed by a shifting of fire at targets behind the earthen embankment, basically by areas. The third intense shelling was again carried out against the forward edge. Finally, after a 5-minute lull, a final intense shelling was carried out with all the weapons against the strongpoints and fortifications of the forward edge. During virtually the entire artillery softening up, specially assigned weapons (artillery guns, tanks and SAU) fired with direct laying to make passages through the earthen embankment. As a whole, according to the conclusion of Western observers, the artillery and air softening up was precisely planned, accurately executed and highly effective.(9)

Some 15-20 minutes after the start of the artillery softening up, the personnel of ten Egyptian infantry brigades began coming down to the canal bank with the assault and landing boats and rafts which were launched immediately while the combat engineers prepared rafts for the crossing. At 1420 hours the troops with their personal weapons and mortars began loading into the crossing equipment. The crossing had started.

Some 20-35 minutes later, the assault companies and platoons of the Egyptian troops had crossed to the eastern bank of the canal and had begun occupying the enemy strongpoints and fortifications. Around 8,000 men landed. For quickly crossing the steep slopes of the earthen embankment, they employed previously-made folding ladders which they had taken with them. By 1500 hours, the commanders of the infantry brigades with their staffs had crossed to the bridgeheads captured on the eastern bank and a half hour after that, the commanders of the infantry divisions.(10)

Characteristic of the canal crossing operation were the actions of the units of the 19th Infantry Division of the 3d Egyptian Army which crossed the Suez Canal in its southern part, in the area of the population point of Tisa. The division's units and subunits, having started the crossing according to the general plan, by 1519 hours had on the eastern bank of the canal two infantry companies from each infantry battalion as well as the antitank platoons of the battalions. Antitank ambushes were also organized and these subsequently turned out to be very effective. On the probable approaches of enemy tanks (at a distance of 3-4 km from the positions occupied by the Egyptians), each first echelon infantry company set up one or two ambushes consisting of two or three grenade launchers or a recoilless weapon and a hand-held grenade launcher. However, the achieved success was not immediately followed up. Without considering the specific situation, the battalion commanders took a decision to dig in on the eastern bank of the canal and wait for enemy counterattacks.

The first echelon battalions were in such a situation for 2.5-3 hours. Under their cover they began crossing the batteries of 120-mm mortars while the combat engineers began making passages through the earthen embankment of the eastern shore (in places which had previously been hit by artillery fire). This was done with explosives, by hydraulic monitors which had moved up quickly on launches and then by bulldozers which had crossed on ferries.

Events on the other sectors also developed in approximately the same manner. Several hours after the start of the operation, 10-12 passages through the earthen embankment had been made for each advancing Egyptian division. Subsequently, they were employed for the armored equipment, transport and so forth.

At the same time, pontoon crossings were thrown up along the entire front of advance and these were covered against air strikes by antiaircraft missile complexes and antiaircraft artillery. In erecting the bridges and crossings, Soviet-produced military equipment was employed and this, as the American researcher A. Barker has written, in referring to the assessment of participants in the events, demonstrated "its indisputable merits in a combat situation."(11) Some 6 hours after the start of the crossing, in the zone of advance of the 2d Egyptian Army there were already 4 bridges over which the tank

and mechanized divisions crossed quickly to the eastern bank to exploit the success. In the zone of advance of the 3d Army, 3 bridges were erected later, by the morning of 7 October.(12) As a total in the zone of each division there were up to 200 assault and landing boats, 10-12 ferry crossings and 1 or 2 bridges.

The Israeli troops, caught by surprise, did not put up serious resistance and, in essence, without a fight surrendered the main part of the strongpoints and fortifications in the first position and were not even able to release the burning mixture into the water for preventing the crossing. Surprise and the weak enemy resistance made it possible for the Egyptian troops to cross the canal with few losses and capture the first position of the enemy defenses, having advanced to a depth of 3-5 km. By the end of the day of 8 October, two army bridgeheads up to 10-12 km deep had been established on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal.(13)

Having recovered from the initial thrust, the Israeli Command attempted to launch a counterstrike. The Egyptian formations and units drove this off with great losses for the enemy, with the Israeli 190th Brigade being defeated and its commander taken prisoner.(14) After this, a long lull set in on the Sinai Front and the Egyptian troops received orders from Sadat to halt and wait for reinforcements. Many foreign observers assume that this decision which had nothing to do with the actual situation had been taken by the President out of political considerations and under pressure from the United States which in no way wanted a military defeat of Israel.(15)

The indecisiveness and slowness of the Egyptian Command were combined with the laxity of the troops and staffs. The flanks, particularly of the armies, were poorly recovered and reconnaissance was virtually idle. The most vulnerable was the boundary of the 2d and 3d Egyptian Armies along the northern bank of the Great Bitter Lake where only small groups covering the road junctions were active. Israeli intelligence which in addition to its own information had received the data of the U.S. satellite system promptly reported this to its military command which also employed the received data in working out the plan for a counteroffensive.

According to the Israeli plan, a thrust was to be launched against the major Egyptian troop grouping, combat was to be shifted to Egyptian territory and the war victoriously concluded. According to the over-all concept of the operation, the troops which had been moved up and deployed were to commence assaults against the main forces of the Egyptian armies on the central sectors in order, having drawn forces and attention from the army boundaries, to launch the main thrust there, to break through to the canal, to cross it and then, in increasing the size of the bridgehead, to strike against the flanks and rear of the Egyptian armies, opening up the path for an offensive against Cairo.

On the morning of 15 October, the Israeli troops went over to a counteroffensive on the central sectors of the front opposite the 2d and 3d Egyptian Armies. At 1700 hours, a diverting thrust had been launched to the north of the road of Gata—Great Bitter Lake—Dewersaur. The Egyptian troops began to retreat, further exposing the boundary between their armies. In the evening of 15 October, the Israeli vanguard overcame the resistance of the Egyptian units and during the night of 16 October, 7 amphibious tanks and 8 armored personnel carriers unhindered crossed the Great Bitter Lake in its northern part and captured a bridgehead. The successful actions of the Israeli forward detachment can be explained by the fact that the Egyptian Command, not allowing the possibility of a crossing of the lake by the Egyptian troops, had not assigned forces to defend the west bank. The Israeli engineer units which arrived by dawn organized a crossing using self-propelled ferries. The Egyptian artillery brigade which was not far off opened fire and sunk one of the ferries but was soon neutralized. The further crossing was carried out unhindered and during the night of 18 October another 30 tanks had crossed to the bridgehead.

The Egyptian Command had every opportunity to attack the enemy crossings, employing the nearby 182d Parachute Brigade which was highly battleworthy and ready. Units of the brigade had almost reached the Israeli crossings in the area of the Great Bitter Lake when the commander received orders to pull his units back. Only on 18 October did the Egyptian Command send two of its brigades against the Israeli troops, but the time had already been missed, the balance of forces was not in favor of the Egyptians and they suffered losses without achieving success. By the end of the day a portion of the Israeli troops which had crossed the canal reached the flank of the Egyptian armies while another reached the canal to the north of the Great Bitter Lake.(16) During the night of 19 October, Israeli combat engineers erected two bridges over the canal. The armored and mechanized brigades were shifted to the west bank and these fanned out into the flank and rear of the Egyptian 3d Army. By the end of the day of 21 October, the bridgehead had been widened along the front to 30 km and up to 20 km in depth, with over five Israeli brigades, including three armored ones, operating there.(17)

In continuing a further offensive, the Israeli troops on 23 October reached Suez. Although the Israelis did not succeed in capturing it, the 3d Egyptian Army was surrounded. By the end of the day of 25 October, the Israeli troops on the west bank of the Suez Canal had captured a bridgehead which was 100 km along the front and 30 km in depth and were continuing the offensive.

In the arising situation, the USSR government announced that it would not remain indifferent to events in this area. The Soviet statement and protests of the international community forced Israel in the evening of 25 October 1973 to break off fighting.

In analyzing the experience of organizing and conducting the crossing of large water obstacles in the course of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, foreign military reviewers have drawn a number of conclusions.

A characteristic feature in the actions of both belligerents was poor intelligence and, as a consequence, an underestimation of the enemy's forces and capabilities. An instructive example is the preparation of the operation to cross the Suez Canal by the Egyptian troops. This was carried out with all care, it was coordinated in detail and thought out in the various elements. Great attention was given to ensuring secrecy in the elaboration of the operation and in concentrating the troops.

A positive evaluation should also be given to the training of the Egyptian personnel for the forthcoming crossing and for capturing the forward edge of the enemy defenses and its ability to employ both antitank weapons as well as the facilities necessary for crossing the high earthen embankment on the bank. In the admission of the general of the Israeli Army, D. Elazar, "the most unexpected thing in October 1973 was the high military skill of the Egyptian soldier."(18)

However, the artillery softening up and cooperation of the branches of troops and armed services had been planned clearly only for the first period, the stage of crossing the Suez Canal. Subsequently, the actions of the troops largely lost their cohesiveness while the aviation, artillery and tanks frequently operated without considering the tasks of the infantry formations.

In the crossing of the Suez Canal, during the period of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, both belligerents effectively employed modern types of weapons. In noting the effectiveness of weapons and combat equipment which to a significant degree were responsible for dispelling the myth of the invincibility of the Israeli Army, the Egyptian government repeatedly expressed gratitude to the Soviet Union and to the other socialist countries for the great military and economic aid. In the words of the Cairo newspaper *Al Gumhuriya*, "at the disposal of the Egyptian and Syrian Armed Forces were the effective weapons of Soviet friends. The Soviet Union showed at a crucial moment that it is a friend on whom one can count and certainly friends are recognized in a calamity."(19)

As a whole, the experience of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, in the opinion of Western military specialists, clearly showed that the success of an offensive involving the crossing of a water obstacle depends upon careful and covert preparation for the operation, constant active reconnaissance of the enemy during all stages of the operation, precisely organized cooperation of all the forces involved in the crossing, decisive and enterprising actions by the troops as well as high skill of the personnel, troops and staffs.

Footnotes

1. *Military Review*, No 11, 1979, p 2.
2. "Lokalnyye voyny: istoriya i sovremennost'" [Local Wars: History and Modern Times], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1981, pp 154-155.
3. *Military Review*, No 4, 1982, pp 70-72.
4. E. Monroe and A. Farrar-Hockley, "The Arab-Israeli War, October 1973," London, 1975, p 17.
5. *Military Review*, No 11, 1979, pp 2-3.
6. *Zarubezhnoye voyennoye obozreniye*, No 5, 1974, pp 12-13; No 23, 1975, p 19; E. Monroe and A. Farrar-Hockley, op. cit., p 19.
7. E. Monroe and A. Farrar-Hockley, op. cit., p 16.
8. M. Heikal, "The road to Ramadan," London, 1975, p 207.
9. *Military Review*, No 11, 1979, pp 5-6.
10. H. El-Badry, "October War," Cairo, 1977, p 50.
11. A. Barker, "Arab-Israeli Wars," New York, 1981, p 136.
12. "Lokalnyye voyny: istoriya....," p 157.
13. Ibid.
14. H. El-Badry, op. cit., pp 20-26; *Armor*, No 3, May-June 1983, pp 9-10.
15. M. Heikal, op. cit., p 215.
16. E. Monroe and A. Farrar-Hockley, op. cit., p 28.
17. "Lokalnyye voyny: istoriya....," pp 159-160.
18. H. El-Badry, op. cit., p 97.
19. *Zarubezhnoye voyennoye obozreniye*, No 5, 1974, p 16.

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M.V. Frunze on Role of Economy in War
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[Article by Col A.P. Ivanov, doctor of economic sciences:
"M.V. Frunze on the Role of the Economy in War"]

[Text] In examining the problem of the relationship of the economy and war, M.V. Frunze under the specific historical conditions developed this completely, and showed the ways for preparing the national economy for defense under the conditions of the threat of war from imperialism. In his article "The Front and Rear in a War of the Future," he commented: "Once the direct burden of waging war falls on all the people and all the nation, once the rear assumes such importance in the general course of military operations, then naturally the task of complete and planned preparations for this even in peacetime moves to the forefront."(1)

Proceeding from Lenin's ideas on the unity of the front and the rear in wars to defend the socialist fatherland, M.V. Frunze noted the growing role of the rear in the economic support of the armies. "...The link of the front with the rear in our times," he wrote, "should become much closer, direct and decisive. The life and work of the front at each given moment is determined by the work and condition of the rear. In this sense the center of gravity in waging a war has moved from the front backwards to the rear."(2)

In analyzing the experience of World War I, M.V. Frunze commented that there were not enough supplies prepared in peacetime for waging it. All the warring states, having consumed them in 2 or 3 months, were confronted with the necessity of switching the economy to military production. The Russian General Staff, for example, felt that it would be enough to supply the Russian Army with 6.6 million rifles. Actually, 17.7 million were dispatched to the front and even this was not enough.(3) Considering this, M.V. Frunze drew very important and far-reaching conclusions on the early preparation of the nation for defense. This preparation, he pointed out, should be aimed, in the first place, at uninterrupted supply of the front with everything essential for conducting combat operations, secondly, supplying the rear itself with everything necessary to maintain its working energy and moral stability on a proper level.(4)

M.V. Frunze recommended paying more attention to mobilization preparation. He pointed out that even in peacetime it is essential to achieve a situation so that in the event of necessity the nation could switch to a wartime footing quickly and painlessly.(5) Since the maintaining of large military supplies in peacetime involved enormous outlays, it was preferable for a state to organize additional production capacity in wartime and quickly develop the economy, science and technology the achievements of which could be quickly

employed for a sharp increase in the production of weapons. In developing this notion and in raising the question of the preparation of the nation for defense, M.V. Frunze emphasized that "an operational plan should be worked out for the deployment of the national economy during a war just as we work out one for the troops. This plan should accurately take into account all our requirements and all our resources. Correct and continuous supply of both the front and the rear should be ensured. This work is unbelievably complex but it is also both essential and feasible."(6)

M.V. Frunze was one of the first Soviet theorists to formulate the thesis on the comprehensive solution of national economic and defense tasks. The essence of this is that the plans for peacetime construction should also take into account the defense requirements of the nation. With any new undertaking, he felt, be it economic, cultural and so forth, one should always pose the question: how do the results of this undertaking conform to the question of ensuring national defense? Is it possible without harming the peacetime requirements to also achieve certain military tasks?(7)

In practice and in theoretical articles M.V. Frunze developed and carried out Lenin's thesis on the most rigid economy in everything. We should point out that the people's commissars, the members of the world's first worker-peasant Soviet government, were an example of thriftiness, humility in personal needs and carefulness in state matters. M.V. Frunze was no exception. As a state and military leader of the Leninist type, he directly raised the question of the economic and efficient use of the resources assigned for defense. Thus, in a speech at an all-Union conference on the territorial formations on 14 March 1924, he emphasized that our state resources are poor and for this reason the state has been forced to expend for military defense far from the amounts which would be required for its proper organization. This has confronted the military department with definite requirements and has forced it to get by with minimum financial expenditures.(8)

The development of the defense economy, M.V. Frunze felt, should be a matter of special attention for the military department and the state. Being first the deputy and later the chairman of the USSR RVS [Revolutionary Military Council], he delved carefully into the questions of military production. In speaking at the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Military Academy on 20 December 1924 on the results of the Plenum of the USSR RVS, M.V. Frunze commented that military production was increasing in the nation, the quality of the defense products was improving and prices dropping. Here as an example he gave the decline in the cost of rifles from 85 to 44 rubles. "If we continue along the same path," he emphasized, "then undoubtedly even within the limits of the small budget we will be able to quickly increase the amount of our material and technical resources."(9)

In his theoretical works M.V. Frunze repeatedly examined the questions of the dependence of military might and military art upon the nation's economic state and its capabilities. In formulating the concept of a unified military doctrine, he noted its economic causality and dependence upon the development level of the productive forces and the class essence of the state. In bringing out the connection and relation of military affairs and economic conditions, he felt that all military affairs in a given state even to the point of the teachings on which the organization of its armed forces is based is a reflection of its entire way of life and ultimately its economic life, as the prime source of all forces and resources.(10)

In giving great importance to the strengthening of the Armed Forces, M.V. Frunze pointed out that the viability of the troops depends upon the state of the national economy. Under the conditions of a developed economy and with an extensive territory the armies can quickly recover their lost battleworthiness. For this reason it is essential to constantly boost economic potential, to locate the productive forces rationally, and bring about a further over-all rise in the nation's economy.

In commanding armies and fronts, M.V. Frunze felt with particular urgency what it means for the troops to lack weapons and ammunition, food and clothing. After the Civil War, where over a period of 3 years, the industry provided the Red Army with around 2.5 million rifles, 21,000 machine guns, approximately 1.5 billion cartridges, 3,973 guns, around 8 million shells, 669 aircraft and other military equipment(11), M.V. Frunze constantly raised the questions of the need to develop the economy and particularly industry, and delved into the work of the defense enterprises. In his report "The Red Army and the Defense of the Soviet Union" given on 19 May 1925 at the Third Congress of USSR Soviets, he thoroughly analyzed the state and tasks in developing defense production in the nation and its dependence upon the development level of heavy industry.(12)

Politically erudite and possessing economic knowledge, M.V. Frunze clearly saw the advantages on the questions of employing the nation's economic capabilities for the defense needs of the socialist system over the capitalist one. In a speech at the Second All-Ukrainian Congress of Peasant Committees in February 1922, he commented: "If a impoverished, devastated and tortured nation has been able to create, arm, cloth, shod and feed over 5 million soldiers over a period of 4 years; if with the bayonets of this army it was able to defeat the ring of enemies squeezing us from all sides; if we now have been able to achieve a situation where international capital, having despaired of stifling us in an open clash, is now resorting to peace talks with us—this means that we have nothing to fear for the future."(13)

The preparation of the nation's economy for defense, as M.V. Frunze repeatedly pointed out, is greatly facilitated by the nature of the socialist economy. The USSR differs from bourgeois states in the fact, he said, that it has state

industry. This opens up great prospects for the nation. The correctness of this conclusion was tested out and confirmed by the entire course of history. The great advantages of socialism were of enormous importance during the years of the harsh testing of the Great Patriotic War. They are our dependable potential also in the event that imperialism starts a new war against the USSR.

An important state task is the most efficient use of the resources and financial means allocated for defense. For this, there must be high military-economic competence of the personnel, both civilian and military, and primarily the leadership. All the Soviet people, M.V. Frunze thought, should participate in preparing the nation for defense. Military work must be so organized that it actually is carried out not only by the persons in the ranks of the military department and under the colors of the army but also by each Soviet citizen wherever he may be and whatever position he may hold. This awareness must be inculcated primarily in the leaders of our state, party, soviet and other organizations."⁽¹⁴⁾ In order that the civilian specialists have a more profound knowledge of national defense questions, M.V. Frunze proposed setting up under certain higher institutions of learning military chairs which would provide the future national economic leaders with the necessary economic and military knowledge.

The ideas of M.V. Frunze on the economic training of personnel are also timely now. Without a knowledge of the economy and without the ability to think and act in an economically intelligence manner, commented the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, M.S. Gorbachev, "there is no modern worker."⁽¹⁵⁾ This idea applies fully to the personnel of the Armed Forces, particularly to the leadership element which to a decisive degree determines the organization of all economic work in the troops.

Because of his official duties, M.V. Frunze was practically involved in resolving questions of the military-economic training of officer personnel. Being persuaded of the ever-growing dependence of strategy and tactics upon the national economy, he felt it essential to thoroughly acquaint the future army leaders with the problems of the national economy from the viewpoint of the needs of war. "Our generals," emphasized M.V. Frunze, "should be fully armed not only with military knowledge but also political and economic, for now...without a knowledge of these aspects it is impossible to successfully lead the army. The questions of military strategy, political and economic strategy are woven in the tightest manner into a single whole."⁽¹⁶⁾

For improving military economic training of military personnel, upon his recommendation, in the RKKA Academy in 1924, a special supply faculty was organized and, in 1925, they introduced the giving of the course "The Economics of War." Military economics began to

be studied more thoroughly in the other military academies as well as in all the courses for command personnel. This made it possible to raise the level of training for the military personnel as well as the personnel of the rear services and help to better resolve the questions of rear support for the troops.

M.V. Frunze had high regard for the role of the rear services and gave great importance to rear support for the troops in operations. "Without the most careful," he pointed out, "organization of the rear services based on precise mathematical calculations, without organizing correct supply of the front with everything needed to conduct military operations, without the most precise calculation of shipments supporting rear supply, without organizing evacuation questions, the anywhere correct and reasonable conduct of large military operations is inconceivable."⁽¹⁷⁾

The shaping of the military economic thought of officer personnel under present-day conditions is assuming great importance. The officer is obliged to carry out practical tasks considering the military economy, employ methods of systems analysis in determining the effectiveness of employing equipment for military training, for the operation, storage and repair of weapons and military equipment, he must rationally utilize materiel and money and skillfully organize the economic education and indoctrination of the personnel.

Footnotes

1. M.V. Frunze, "Sobr. soch." [Collected Works], Moscow-Leningrad, Gosizdat, Vol 2, 1926, p 98.
2. Ibid., p 97.
3. See: A.A. Manikovskiy, "Boyevoye snabzheniye russkoy armii v mirovuyu voynu" [Battle Supply of the Russian Army in the World War], Moscow-Leningrad, Gosizdat, Vol 1, 1930, p 124.
4. See: M.V. Frunze, "Sobr. soch.," Vol 2, p 98.
5. See: Ibid., p 99.
6. Ibid., p 104.
7. See: Ibid., p 103.
8. See: Ibid., p 5.
9. Ibid., p 199.
10. See: Ibid., Vol 1, 1929, p 214.
11. D.A. Kovalenko, "Oboronnaya promyshlennost Sovetskoy Rossii v 1918-1920 gg." [The Defense Industry of Soviet Russia in 1918-1920], Moscow, Nauka, 1970, pp 383, 393.

12. See: M.V. Frunze, "Sobr. soch.," Vol 3, p 219.

13. Ibid., Vol 1, p 366.

14. Ibid., Vol 2, p 30.

15. See: M.S. Gorbachev, "Zhivoye tvorchestvo naroda" [Living Creation of the People], Moscow, Politizdat, 1985, p 24.

16. M.V. Frunze, "Sobr. soch.," Vol 2, pp 37-38.

17. Ibid., p 165.

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New Works on History of Military Art

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[Review, published under the heading "Criticism and Bibliography," by Lt Gen I.S. Lyutov, doctor of military sciences and professor, of the books "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva: Uchebnik dlya voyennykh akademiy Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil" (The History of Military Art: Textbook for Military Academies of the Soviet Armed Forces), Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, 535 pages and "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva (Biblioteka ofitsera)" [History of Military Art (The Officer's Library)], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1986, 446 pages]

[Text] Soviet military art in each historical stage of the armed combat in defense of the socialist state has developed and improved in close connection with the concrete objective and subjective factors. This has been most strongly influenced by the equipping of the army with new weapons and military equipment. The qualitative changes occurring in the troops have always depended upon the development and capabilities of the means of production. But the methods of conducting military operations have been determined by the entire aggregate of objective laws and principles of armed combat.

Two books published in 1984-1986 [the books under review here] have been devoted to the questions of the history of military art. Both of these have been written on the basis of Marxist-Leninist methodology by a collective of military historians. They have employed the documents of the Communist Party and the Soviet government, archival sources as well as previously published works on military theory and history.

The reviewed works examine the rise and evolution of the forms and methods of waging armed combat (from ancient times until the last quarter of the 20th Century). Here basic attention has been given to an analysis of the development trends of Soviet military art during the

years of the Great Patriotic War as this was the most important and decisive part of World War II. Precisely the Soviet Army and Navy routed the main forces of the Nazi military coalition. This victory persuasively demonstrated to the entire world the advanced nature of our military art.

As is known, generalized combat experience helps in not only developing the habits of creative thinking in command personnel but also serves largely as a standard in resolving the practical questions of preparing the operations and battles. A study of the past serves the important goal of penetrating more deeply into the essence of the examined phenomena. V.I. Lenin taught that we must not "be satisfied with the abilities developed in us by our previous experience but we must go constantly farther and achieve constantly more, move constantly from the easier tasks to the more difficult ones. Without this any progress is impossible...."(1)

Both books emphasize that the experience gained by the USSR Armed Forces during the years of the Great Patriotic War is of exceptionally important significance for the development of military art under present-day conditions.

The textbook "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva" designed for the military academies has examined well the stage of the rise and development of Soviet military art. An indisputable merit of the work is the fact that it provides extensive factual material. For example, the combat actions in the areas of Lake Khasan, the Khalkhin-Gol River and during the Soviet-Finnish War are examined with sufficient completeness.

The authors emphasize that during the years of the Great Patriotic War the strategic tasks stemming from its political goals held a predominant position in comparison with the tasks of operational art and tactics. The correct conclusion is drawn that, in defining the goals of the war and the strategic operations as well as the methods of their conduct, one must always take into account the real capabilities of the Army and Navy forces and the actual level of the theory and practice of military art.

Using concrete examples the work shows that in the course of military operations tactics underwent substantial changes. A great contribution to its development was made by the soldiers who in battle showed boldness and resourcefulness, strategem and initiative. The high tactical art of the officers at times contributed to the achieving of significant operational results and this led ultimately to the carrying out of major strategic tasks.

By drawing on carefully selected material, the authors have succeeded in showing that precisely tactics accumulated the largest number of diverse combat procedures and methods of conducting offensive and defensive actions. The troops had to defeat the enemy under

different conditions. One battle was never like the next. And this always demanded from the commanders creative decisions which would make it possible to defeat the enemy.

The book brings out well the process of the interaction of all the component parts of military which under present-day conditions are becoming evermore diverse and dynamic.

In addition to an analysis of the development of Soviet military art and its role in achieving victory over Nazi Germany, the work examines in sufficient detail the combat operations of the U.S. and British Armed Forces during World War II and also provides an analysis of their postwar state.

As a positive phenomenon one must note the presence in the textbook of a special chapter devoted to the armed forces and military art of the Warsaw Pact states and the socialist nations of Asia and the Republic of Cuba.

It is interesting to read the brief review and conclusions on the major local wars of the postwar period in Korea, Vietnam, Algeria and the Near East.

A drawback of the edition could be seen in the extremely terse exposition of questions relating to the combat employment of the combat arms and Armed Services as this somewhat reduces its practical value, particularly for aviation and naval officers.

In the book "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva" (The Officer's Library), the basic stages in the development of military art have been set out more concisely than in the reviewed textbook. The problems of military art are brought out in it on a basis of analyzing combat operations according to the periods of the Great Patriotic War and World War II. Here the generalizations and conclusions both on the Soviet Armed Forces as well as on the American-English troops have been put in special sections.

In relying on historical examples, the authors have endeavored to show the new things which have appeared in military affairs. Such an approach, undoubtedly, helps not only to understand the dialectical succession in the development of the forms and methods of conducting armed combat but also in showing the ways of their further improvement.

It is a pleasure to note that the work has a special chapter on the partisan movement during the years of the Great Patriotic War where they describe the forms of organizing the partisan forces, their cooperation with the Soviet Army and tactics.

All of this is to the merits of the book. However, it also has shortcomings. We feel that even with its limited volume it would have been possible to devote several pages to the military operations of the Soviet Army at the

end of the 1920s until the beginning of the 1940s. The characteristic traits of the military art of local wars from the 1950s until the end of the 1970s have not been shown. There has not been a fully executed analysis of the development of military art during the first period of the Great Patriotic War. The combat operations on the defensive, the main type of strategic actions during this period, were very cursorily examined. Little attention was paid to the questions of organizing and carrying out the counteroffensive by the Soviet troops at Moscow.

The book does not consider the thesis that an operation is a form of military actions and is carried out in each instance by a method corresponding to the specific conditions. At times, the content of the method of conducting an operation is replaced by the "form of conducting an operation" (p 235) and this must not be considered valid. The value of the book is also reduced by the fact that an analysis or assessment does not always follow from a description of specific events.

The conclusions of the authors could have been more persuasive if they had given the names of the commanders who were the immediate creators of victory in the battlefield. The new generation of officers would know more, see farther and develop faster if there were more visible images for emulation.

In the publication there are also lamentable inaccuracies. Thus, if one judges from the comments on p 100, from 1956 up to the present, the Soviet Army had armored troops, while since 1960 they have been called the tank troops.(2) The authors assert that in the Soviet Air Forces "in 1940...instead of regiments and brigades they began constituting air divisions" (p 103). But the divisions were constituted precisely from the regiments (the brigades were actually eliminated).(3) It must also be pointed out that data on foreign postwar military equipment dates solely to the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s and this does not provide a full notion of its further development, in particular under present-day conditions.

The veterans of the Great Patriotic War—from the platoon commander to the large unit commander—recall well that the preparations for any battle and operation were organically linked to the carrying out of party-political measures with the personnel. But the questions of party-political support under front conditions in the work are examined very briefly. (This also applies to the textbook for the military academies.)

A positive feature of both works on the history of military art is the fact that they bring out with sufficient completeness the fundamental changes brought about by the appearance of new weapons, that is, nuclear missiles weapons, radio electronic equipment, and the equipment for the full mechanization and motorization of the troops and for their air- ferrying into the deep rear of the

enemy. All of this has led to fundamental changes in the organizational structure of the troops, in the nature and methods of conducting combat.

The designated works bring out the important characteristic traits of foreign military art and they show the new forms and methods of conducting armed combat and the development of the main types of weapons. It is emphasized that since World War II the organizational development of the armed forces and the development of military art in the leading capitalist states have been decisively influenced by strategic concepts depending upon the balance of forces between imperialism and socialism as well as upon the appearance of new weapons.

An analysis of the contents of the examined works on the history of military art indicates that the questions of the theory and practice of military art in them have been examined rather fully and on a profound scientific basis. One is struck by the good exposition of many questions, the large amount of factual material, the close linkage of events and phenomena, and the disclosure of the history of the rise and subsequent development of military art. The publishing of these two works will help to broaden and deepen the military history knowledge of the officers in the Soviet Armed Forces.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 37, p 196.
2. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 7, 1973, p 671.
3. V.S. Shumikhin, "Sovetskaya voyennaya aviatsiya. 1917-1941" [Soviet Military Aviation. 1917-1941], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1986, p 236.

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